

The African Elephant Crisis

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The massacre of African elephants is happening all over Africa and is the worst it has been since the 80's, but it may be much more severe than in that decade.

In the 80's before the ban on ivory sales was implemented, between the years 1979 and 1989 the global demand for ivory caused elephant populations to decline dramatically. In 1979 there were only 1.3 million of elephants and currently are approximately 450,000, but scientists and authorities say may be less than 270,000 (This was dated in 2009). In 2009 it was estimated that about 38,000 elephants were killed annually.

China is the main country that buys legal and illegal elephant ivory in the world, making it the main destination for poached elephant ivory from Africa. Prices have increased from \$200 USD per kilo to \$830 USD from 2006 to 2010. It is estimated that at least a 75% of all African ivory is bought by the Chinese.

After the CITES CoP in 2007, it was decided to allow the sale of elephant ivory confiscated from Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe, killing of elephants began to climb throughout Africa. For example, in Kenya, in 2007, 47 elephants were killed in 2008: 145, in 2009 214, in 2011 289 and in 2012 a total of 360. In Gabon a decade 11,000 elephants are killed. Sierra Leone lost its last elephant in January 2010. In Tanzania they are losing about 23,000 elephants a year, which is equivalent to 67 elephants per day!

Altogether East Africa has lost 85% of its elephants in 15 years.

Recently, the African elephant hunting has been related to finance wars and terrorism, including the one of dictator Kofi. Their armies have destroyed humans and elephants from Sudan to Uganda and other countries. Somali pirates are often the culprits of the slaughter of these magnificent animals too. Elephants, adults and babies, are shot from helicopters, poisoned with fruit or darts, killed with spears or are riddled with bullets and machetes. The killing is always indiscriminate and brutal.

What is CATCA-ACWF doing to help the African elephants?

Since 2007, CATCA lobbies against the threatening proposals of one-time sales of ivory and for down listing the populations of African elephants with the member countries at the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), which is an international agreement between governments under the UNEP.

Since 2009, CATCA has been investigating the ivory e-trade in Latin America and in 2012-2013, CATCA and the ACWF joined forces to investigate the e-trade of elephant ivory in 8 African and Asian countries.

Our teams found several large amounts of ivory for sale illegally in those and other countries. We notified the enforcement authorities of those governments and delivered our report to delegations of 5 continents during the last CITES CoP16 in March. Interpol congratulated us for our efforts in exposing this illegal trade and we discussed our methodology with many countries for them to create their own enforcement squads to monitor their internet.

Our last investigation report can be found online at: <http://www.catcahelpanimals.org/87.html>

To read about our Collaboration with the well known enforcement agency the Kenya Wildlife Service, please check our website in the **Elephant Section**.

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