

Monitoring the illegal killing of elephants



CITES MIKE PROGRAMME

About MIKE

The Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) programme is an international collaboration established by a resolution of the Conference of the Parties (CoP) to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) at its 10th Meeting (Harare, 1997).

MIKE is a monitoring system put in place across the entire range of African and Asian elephants to provide information for range States to make appropriate management and enforcement decisions, and to build institutional capacity in range States for the long-term conservation of their elephant populations.

MIKE fosters dialogue among Parties and facilitates decision-making by the CoP regarding the protected status of elephants by providing reliable information on levels and trends in the illegal killing of elephants; determining changes in these trends over time; determining factors associated with those trends; and assessing the extent to which observed trends are related to CITES decisions on the ivory trade.

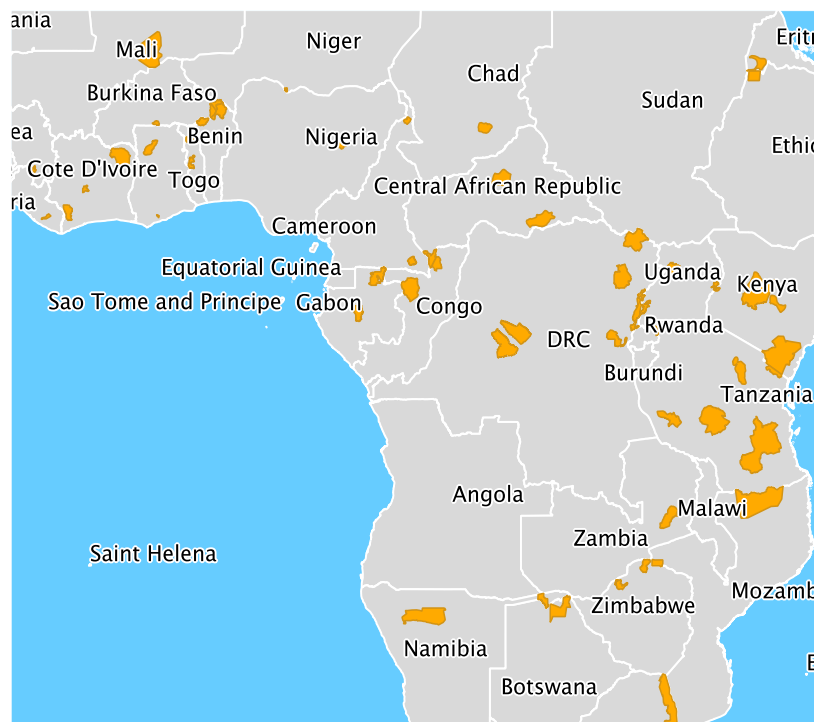
What We Do

MIKE operates in over 80 sites, spread across 44 elephant range States in Africa and Asia, to build the capacity of elephant range States to deploy law enforcement monitoring and ranger-based data collection systems for adaptive conservation area management. MIKE works with rangers, conservation area managers, wildlife authorities and decision makers to improve the effectiveness of law enforcement on the ground.

Experience in the implementation of MIKE has shown that, in order to ensure the collection and flow of monitoring data to meet information needs at the international level, monitoring routines must first serve the needs of the protected areas and wildlife authorities. When monitoring data are immediately useful to site and country alike, higher-level data needs are automatically met as a by-product. In consequence, MIKE has instituted monitoring routines that serve the wider biodiversity, law enforcement and threat monitoring needs of conservation areas, national governments and the international community.

The MIKE programme has made considerable achievements since its implementation began in 2001. MIKE has succeeded in conveying – to elephant range States and CITES Parties alike – the importance of using objective data and scientific evidence to inform decision-making at all levels of management, from the site through to the national and international levels.

By building capacity and setting standards to monitor elephant status and threats, MIKE has promoted international collaboration and new levels of understanding of the challenges associated with elephant conservation and management. Importantly, the monitoring methods spearheaded by MIKE are actively adopted by range States, and are increasingly being used to monitor other species of interest, and are being deployed beyond the originally designated MIKE sites.



Map of MIKE sites in Africa



Rangers inspect a carcass at a MIKE training session



Ranger briefing before a patrol

Governance

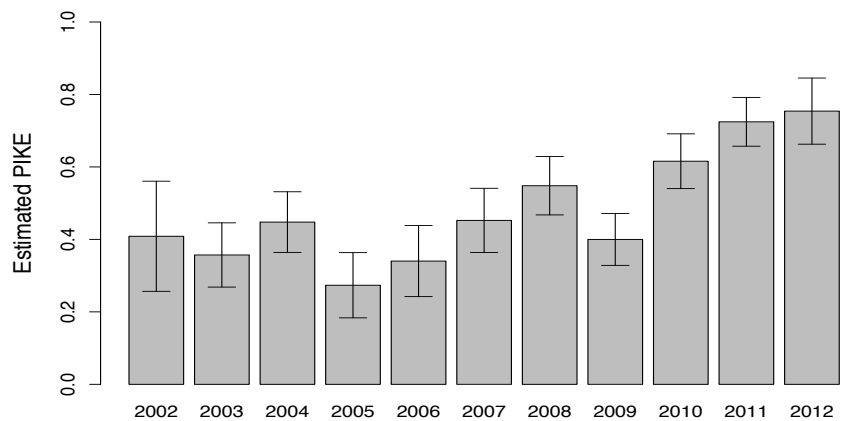
MIKE is owned and implemented by the range States of African and Asian elephants, with technical assistance and coordination of the CITES Secretariat. For the purposes of MIKE implementation, the African and Asian regions are divided into four and two sub-regions respectively. Each of these sub-regions has its MIKE implementation supervised by a Subregional Steering Committee comprised by the national wildlife directors of the range States, and facilitated by the MIKE Team, which is composed by a Central Coordinating Unit based at UNEP in Nairobi, Kenya, and Six Subregional Support Units. Each range State has nominated a National Officer and Site Officers as the core staff for implementing the MIKE system in their country.

The MIKE Technical Advisory Group (TAG) is a group of volunteer elephant conservation experts which guides the technical quality of the MIKE processes and methods, and acts as a peer-review group for MIKE's analytical outputs. The TAG is comprised by one expert from each sub-region and six global specialists.

Main Findings

MIKE has documented and reported alarming increases in levels of illegal killing of elephants across much of Africa. Information provided through the MIKE network is being extensively used to catalyse the response of the international community to the poaching crisis.

The ongoing increase in poaching levels is being felt across all four African subregions, with Central Africa being the worst-affected. Some 17,000 elephants were illegally killed in MIKE sites in 2011 alone. Preliminary evidence suggests similar levels of poaching in 2012.



Trends in elephant poaching levels in African MIKE sites to mid-2012

MIKE analyses show that poaching levels are strongly related to poverty in and around sites; law enforcement capacity; and national-level governance. The temporal trends in poaching levels are strongly correlated with trends in consumer demand in ivory-consuming states in East Asia.

Funding and Sustainability

The progress made by the MIKE programme in recent years has been made possible thanks to the support of the European Commission, notably through an ACP project from the European Development Fund that sustained MIKE operations in Africa between 2007 and 2012. The European Commission has also provided additional bridging funds until 2014.

While it is expected that the monitoring systems put in place by MIKE will eventually become fully embedded in the management routines and recurrent budgets of elephant range States, building lasting capacity requires a long-term investment. In the face of the ongoing poaching crisis, funding to improve the effectiveness of elephant protection is now more needed than ever.



Contact us
 CITES MIKE Programme
 c/o UNEP/DELCO, PO Box 30552
 Nairobi 00100, Kenya
 Tel: +254 205 125 174
 Email: info@citesmike.org
www.citesmike.org

