CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA

Seventy-seventh meeting of the Standing Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 6–10 November 2023

Species conservation and trade

Fauna

Elephants (Elephantidae spp.)

REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOLUTION CONF. 10.10 (REV. COP19)

1. This document has been submitted by the Secretariat.

Background

2. Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP19) on *Trade in elephant specimens*, in the section *Regarding trade in elephant specimens*, directs the Secretariat, in paragraph 12 ,as follows:

> *12. DIRECTS the Secretariat, pending the necessary external funding, to:*
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> *a) report on information and analyses provided by MIKE and ETIS at each meeting of the Conference of the Parties and, subject to the availability of adequate new MIKE or ETIS data, at relevant meetings of the Standing Committee; and, in collaboration with TRAFFIC as appropriate, provide other reports, updates or information on MIKE and ETIS as required by the Conference of the Parties, the Standing Committee, the MIKE and ETIS Technical Advisory Group (TAG) or Parties;*
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> *b) prior to relevant meetings of the Standing Committee, invite the United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) to provide an overview of trade in elephant specimens as recorded in the CITES database; the IUCN Species Survival Commission (IUCN/SSC) African and Asian Elephant Specialist Groups to submit any new and relevant information on the conservation status of elephants, pertinent conservation actions and management strategies; and African elephant range States to provide information on progress made in the implementation of the African Elephant Action Plan; and*
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> *c) on the basis of the information specified in paragraphs a) and b) above, recommend actions for consideration by the Conference of the Parties or the Standing Committee;*

3. The Secretariat prepared the present document for consideration by the Standing Committee, in order to meet its reporting requirements indicated above, as well as those under Decisions 19.94 and 19.95, 19.99 and 19.100, 18.117 (Rev. CoP19) and 18.118. The Decisions are included in Annex 1 to the present document for ease of reference. The document provides an update on the implementation of various provisions of Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP19), and action taken on the implementation of the related decisions.

4. The document is divided into five sections to facilitate its consideration by the Standing Committee:

- Part 1 on the implementation of paragraph 12 of Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP19) as it relates to reports to be submitted by the Secretariat for consideration by the Standing Committee;

- Part 2 on the implementation of Decisions 19.94 and 19.95 on the *Implementation of priority recommendations from the review of the ETIS programme*;

- Part 3 on the implementation of Decisions 19.99 and 19.100 on *Ivory seizures and domestic ivory markets*;

- Part 4 on the implementation of Decisions 18.117 (Rev. CoP19) and 18.118 on the *Closure of domestic ivory markets;* and

- Part 5 on the MIKE and ETIS Subgroup of the Standing Committee.

5. The Secretariat notes that implementation of Decisions 19.35 to 19.37 on *Financial and operational sustainability of the MIKE and ETIS programmes* is addressed in document SC77 Doc. 63.2 prepared for the present meeting

Part 1: Reporting by the Secretariat as per paragraph 12 of Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP19)

6. The Secretariat has received adequate new MIKE and ETIS data and can therefore report on this information and these analyses to the Standing Committee, as required in paragraph 12. a). In accordance with paragraph 12 b), the Secretariat invited the United Nations Environment Programme-World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC), the International for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the Chair of the African Elephant Fund Steering Committee (Chad) to provide new and relevant information concerning the trade in and conservation of elephants. The Secretariat is grateful for their submissions.

7. The various contributions were compiled into an integrated report that is presented in Annex 2 to the present document. It gives an overview of the levels of illegal killing of elephants; illegal and legal trade in elephant specimens; the status of African elephants (*Loxodonta africana*) and Asian elephants (*Elephas maximus*) populations; and updates from the African Elephant Fund on the implementation of the African Elephant Action Plan. Key features of the report in Annex 2 are presented below.

Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) Programme

8. The CITES MIKE Programme operates in a large sample of sites spread across elephant ranges in 32 Parties in Africa and 13 Parties in Asia. There are 69 designated MIKE sites in Africa, and 30 sites in Asia. No new MIKE sites were added to the MIKE network in 2022.

9. MIKE data is collected in the field by law enforcement and ranger patrols and through other means in designated MIKE sites. When an elephant carcass is found, site personnel try to establish the cause of death and other details, such as sex and age of the animal, status of ivory and stage of decomposition of the carcass. This information is recorded in standardized carcass forms, details of which are then submitted to the CITES MIKE Programme.

10. The Programme evaluates relative poaching levels based on the Proportion of Illegally Killed Elephants (PIKE), which is calculated on an annual basis as the number of illegally killed elephants found divided by the total number of elephant carcasses found, which includes elephants illegally killed, elephants that died of natural causes, management-related deaths and deaths recorded as unknown (i.e., carcasses for which the cause of death could not be determined). PIKE is an index of poaching pressure and provides trends relating to the levels of poaching. It may be affected by several potential biases related to data quality, reporting rate, carcass detection probabilities, variation in natural mortality rates and other factors, and hence results need to be interpreted with caution.

PIKE analysis in 2022

11. In the MIKE report for Africa and Asia, published on the CITES website on 16 November 2020, the new PIKE trend analysis methodology was shared with CITES Parties. As indicated in that report, the MIKE-ETIS Technical Advisory Group (TAG) recommended the use of the unweighted Bayesian generalised linear mixed model (GLMM) approach (**MM.p.uw**) to interpret PIKE trends over time. A weighted Bayesian GLMM (**MM.p.w**) model that includes elephant population estimates from each MIKE site was trialled on an experimental basis but requires further work by the CITES Secretariat to be carried out in collaboration with

the TAG. The technical materials and R-code utilized from 2020 onwards can be accessed through the list of GitHub repositories provided in Annex 2.

12. The 2022 PIKE trends analysis is presented in the report in Annex 2 and summarized below. It was conducted following the methodology mentioned in the paragraph above and considered by the MIKE-ETIS TAG at the first session of its annual meeting that took place online on 8 August 2023.

PIKE trends: Africa

13. The data set used for this analysis consists of 25,232 records of elephant carcasses found between 2003 and the end of 2022 at 67 MIKE sites in 31 range States in Africa, representing a total of 854 site-years.

14. Compared to the previous PIKE trend analysis of 2021, the PIKE trend analysis presented in this document considers an additional 1,832 records of elephant carcasses encountered in the course of 2022, that were reported by 59 MIKE sites across 30 range States in Africa. The number of reporting MIKE sites on which the analysis is based decreased from 61 in 2021 to 59 in 2022. Five sites were unable to report in 2022 due to various reasons, such as insecurity which prevented patrols from being carried out, or insufficient capacity to collect MIKE data. In 2022, there was an increase of 506 carcasses reported, compared to 2021 (1,832 carcasses were reported in 2022, and 1,326 were reported in 2021). This marked an unusually high total number of carcasses, with 2022 ranking as the second highest after the peak of 1,880 carcasses reported in 2012. Due to extreme drought conditions, specifically affecting two MIKE sites in Kenya, these sites had a 55% and 66% increase in total number of carcasses compared to 2021. 306 of the 1,832 carcasses reported in 2022 were recorded as illegally killed; while 262 of the 1,326 carcasses in 2021 were recorded as illegally killed.

15. The annual mean **continental PIKE** generally increased from 2003 to 2010; peaked in 2011; and decreased from 2011 to 2022. Over the last five years, from 2018 to 2022, the continental PIKE estimate shows a clear downward trend, with a confidence level exceeding 95%. The continental PIKE estimate went from 0.54 in 2018 to 0.33 (range 0.28 – 0.39) in 2022. The 2022 PIKE estimate is the lowest since 2003.

16. There is strong evidence that the PIKE trend in **central Africa** increased from 2003 to 2011, followed by a period from 2011 to 2019 where the PIKE remained relatively unchanged. Over the past five years (2018 to 2022), there is evidence of a downward trend, though the PIKE remains higher than the continental average, with a value of 0.52 (range: 0.36 - 0.66). Broadly, the PIKE trend for **eastern Africa** aligns with the continental PIKE trend, with an upward trend from 2003 to 2011, followed by a downward trend after 2011. In the last five years, from 2018 to 2022, there is a clear downward trend. The unweighted PIKE estimate for eastern Africa in 2022 is 0.27 (range: 0.21 - 0.34) and falls below the 2022 average continental PIKE estimate of 0.33 (range: 0.28 – 0.39). The PIKE trend in **southern Africa** increased between 2003 and 2011 and subsequently decreased from 2011 to 2022. In the last five years, from 2018 to 2022, there is a clear downward trend. The unweighted PIKE estimate for southern Africa in 2022 is 0.20 (range: 0.15 – 0.26) and falls below the average continental PIKE estimate.

17. The **west Africa** subregion has the smallest African elephant populations, and typically low numbers of carcasses are reported annually. In 2022, a total of 12 carcasses were reported in the subregion, originating from four sites, while the remaining 11 sites reported no detection of any carcasses. Compared to the three other subregions, west Africa reported the lowest total number of carcasses (945 over 20 years). The limited sample size produces a high level of uncertainty in PIKE estimates, which makes it difficult to infer a subregional trend. Over the past five years (2018 to 2022), there is no statistical evidence to confirm a downward trend. For 2022, the unweighted PIKE estimate in west Africa was 0.43 (range 0.13 – 0.76), higher than the average continental PIKE estimate of 0.33 (range 0.28 – 0.39) for this year.

PIKE trends: Asia

18. The dataset used for this PIKE trend analysis for Asia contained in Annex 2 to this document consists of 4,554 records of elephant carcasses found between 2003 and the end of 2022 at 30 MIKE sites in 13 range States in Asia, representing a total of 310 site-years.

19. Approximately 94% (4,275 out of 4,554) of the carcasses are from MIKE sites in south Asia and the remaining 6% (=279/4,544) from MIKE sites in southeast Asia. It should be noted that more than 70% of Asian elephants occur in south Asia.

20. The number of reporting Parties and sites both increased by one between 2021 and 2022. The total number of carcasses reported decreased slightly from 197 reported in 2021, to 188 reported in 2022. The number of Asian elephants recorded as illegally killed also decreased from 37 in 2021, to 18 in 2022.

21. The continental PIKE trend for Asia, derived from the unweighted Bayesian GLMM over the last five years (2015 to 2019), has stayed relatively level, with an average value of 0.32. From 2021 to 2022, there is no significant change or difference between the two PIKE estimates, and the unweighted PIKE estimate for 2022 is 0.21 (range: 0.13 - 0.30).

22. For Asia, a trend analysis is not reported by subregion because a disproportionately large number of records are from south Asia, and from India in particular. Within south Asia approximately 96% of the records (4,124 carcass records) are from MIKE sites in India, which holds the largest population of Asian elephants.

Human-elephant conflict data

23. The need for more comprehensive reporting on human-elephant conflict-related elephant deaths has been brought to the attention of range States. For 2022, of the 1,832 records reported for Africa, 330 records (18%) were related to a human-elephant conflict (HEC) incidence; 1,393 records (76%) were not related to HEC; and 109 records (6%) were missing information. The type of death associated with human-elephant conflict related incidences were either “illegal” or “management”, with 36% categorized as "illegal”, and 62% categorized as "management". Of the “illegal” deaths, the highest cause was "gunshot," accounting for 82%, while the highest reported "management" related death was "problem animal control", accounting for over 91%. For Asia, of the 188 records reported in 2022, 14 (7%) were related to HEC, 18 (15%) were not related to HEC and 146 (77%) were missing information. Since PIKE is an index of poaching, whether conflict-related death is categorized as illegal or not needs further examination. The CITES Secretariat has continued to collaborate with participating range States and the TAG to get further clarification on this matter and refine the MIKE analysis accordingly.

Elephant Trade Information System (ETIS) Programme

24. ETIS is a comprehensive and global information system whose central feature is a database holding the details of seizures and confiscations of elephant ivory and other elephant specimens reported to occur since 1989.

25. As of 27 July 2023, there were 35,236 records in ETIS from 1989 to 2022, of which 32,180 represent ivory seizures and confiscations (hereafter referred to as seizures or records for brevity), while the remainder comprises seizures of non-ivory elephant products (including manufactured hide products, hair products and meat).

26. Overall, fewer Parties reported to ETIS in 2022 (51 Parties) compared to 2021 (65 Parties). In 2021, there was a considerable increase in reporting to ETIS by Parties, as compared to previous years, which may be accounted for by the increased use by Parties of the ETIS Online database. ETIS received additional seizure data spanning 2020 – 2021 from the World Customs Organization (WCO) in April 2023, amounting to 150 new records that were not yet reported to ETIS by Parties and were added to the database.

27. Through Notification to the Parties No. 2023/082, Parties were requested to review and validate 2022 ETIS records. Parties requested *inter alia* additional information, deletion of records following forensic examination, and corrections of record details. In addition, several Parties requested additional information about data collected from non-Management Authority (MA) sources. As the validation process was underway at time of writing this document, some inquiries remain open. Fewer seizures were reported for 2022 (1,066) compared to 2021 (1,409) and the overall reported weight seized was lower in 2022 (12.2 tonnes) compared to 2021 (16.9 tonnes). In 2022, fewer seizures (8) with seized weight greater than 100 kg were reported compared to 2021 (11); these included large-scale seizures of approximately one tonne, and over four tonnes. While data suggests that the number of large seizures reported to ETIS, and their cumulative weight seized, are lower than the period before the COVID pandemic, the prevalence of seizures of large illegal consignments of several tonnes may indicate that organized criminal activity in illegal ivory trade is still occurring.

28. At CoP19, Parties adopted amendments to paragraph 27 g) of Resolution Conf 10.10 (Rev. CoP19), which states that the detailed data on individual seizure cases, elephant mortalities and law enforcement submitted to MIKE or ETIS are owned by the respective data providers (in the case of MIKE, data providers are only CITES Parties, but ETIS includes data from other sources). Any such data relating to a CITES Party will be

accessible to that Party, the members of the MIKE and ETIS Technical Advisory Group for information and review purposes and the members of the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICCWC) for global research and analysis purposes, unless otherwise specified by the reporting Party as provided for in paragraph 4 of Resolution Conf. 11.17 (Rev. CoP19) on *National reports*. In document SC77 Doc. 32.2 on the *Revised* Guidelines for the preparation and submission of CITES annual reports *and* Guidelines for the preparation and submission of CITES annual illegal trade reports, the Secretariat proposes amendments to the *Guidelines* to address these changes. The Secretariat notes that TRAFFIC would need to make a similar provision in ETIS Online and its standard forms for submission of seizure data to allow Parties to indicate if their ETIS data should not be made available for global research and analysis. The Secretariat notes that only data submitted by Parties through Annual Illegal Trade Reports are included in the CITES Illegal Trade Database. In exchange of data related to seizures of elephant specimens between ETIS and the CITES Illegal Trade Database, the Secretariat will apply the same principle and only transfer data submitted to ETIS by Parties to the CITES Illegal Trade Database for global research and analysis purposes.

Trade in elephant specimens

29. An overview of reported trade in *Loxodonta africana* using CITES annual report data over the period 2018 – 2021 provides the following insights:

    a) Reported direct trade by African elephant range States principally comprised 825 wild-sourced sport-hunted trophies and 9,982 wild-sourced skin pieces (of which 98% were reported for commercial purposes).

    b) Direct trade in wild-sourced ivory carvings reported by African elephant range States totaled 27 kg traded for personal purposes and 704 items (of which 98% were reported as personal purposes). The majority (78%) of ivory carvings traded by weight were reported in 2018 (21 kg), and approximately half of the ivory carvings reported by number were reported in 2021.

    c) Trade in tusks reported by number increased five-fold between 2018 and 2021 (from 22 to 117) according to data reported by African elephant range States, while the number of tusks reported by importers decreased by 30%. All trade in tusks **by weight** was exported from Zimbabwe and almost entirely reported as hunting trophies (H). Exported tusks reported by weight by Zimbabwe in 2021 (5,159 kg) represented the highest level of trade from 2018 to 2021.

    d) When the number of individual elephants involved in the trade is estimated (by assuming that for the tusks data provided, two tusks equal one individual and that each trophy equals one individual), exports reported by four African elephant range States increased between 2018 and 2021 (Botswana, Kenya, South Africa and Zambia). Exports reported by two range States decreased over this period (Mozambique and Zimbabwe). Exports reported by one range State remained the same (Cameroon). The United Republic of Tanzania's annual report for 2021 had not been received at the time of writing, but according to importer data, there was a decrease in exports.

    e) When the declared export quotas for tusks as sport-hunted trophies are compared with exporter-reported and importer-reported data for both tusks and hunting trophies (assuming that one trophy includes two tusks), four exporting range States appear to have exceeded their export quotas (published as zero quotas[1]) over the period 2018-2021: Cameroon (each year 2018-2021), Kenya (in 2021), Mozambique (in 2019), and South Africa (in 2019). Several range States had not informed the Secretariat of a quota, in which case a zero quota was established [as outlined in Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP19)].

30. Many Parties do not follow the *Guidelines for the preparation and submission of CITES annual report*s consistently and this could lead to double counting of trophies. Standardization in reporting of hunting trophies through the application of the *Guidelines*, in particular for species such as *Loxodonta africana* where export quotas have been established, is crucial to assessing compliance with the provisions of the Convention.

31. More systematic collection of serial numbers provided within annual reports through the CITES Trade Database could support CITES implementation, by supporting verification of quota compliance, and could

[1] *Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP19) on* Trade in elephant specimens *recommends that each elephant range State that does not submit its export quota for raw ivory as part of elephant hunting trophies by the deadline will have a zero quota until such time as it communicates its quota in writing to the Secretariat.*

be facilitated by the adoption of electronic permitting and automated transfer of trade data to the CITES Trade Database.

Status of African and Asian elephant populations

African elephant population status

32. The IUCN African elephant Specialist Group (AfESG) maintains the African Elephant Database (AED), the formal repository for geospatial information on the numbers and distribution of the species. The AfESG and IUCN decided in 2021 to treat African forest (*Loxodonta cyclotis*) and savanna elephants (*Loxodonta africana*) as two separate species. This was the result of a consensus that had emerged among experts following new research into the genetics of elephant populations. If a similar decision is adopted by CITES, this may have implications for implementing CITES processes. In this regard, the 19th meeting of the Conference of Parties (CoP19) adopted Decisions 19.275 to 19.277 that set out a process that will be implemented to consider this matter. The Secretariat discusses this matter in more detail in document SC77 Doc. 74 on *Taxonomy and nomenclature of African elephants (*Loxodonta *spp.)*.

33. Two separate status reports, an African Forest Elephant Status Report (AFESR) and an African Savanna Elephant Status Report (ASESR), will be made available during the course of 2023. The reports will provide an update to the 2016 African Elephant Status Report (2016 AESR) and include data received from 2016 through to July 2023. The 2023 elephant status reports will provide levels of details of surveys required in all range States. The latest data in the AFESG indicates that forest elephant populations in seven range States have not been surveyed since 2016, while some savanna elephant populations have not been surveyed in 11 range States. Approximately 22 forest elephant and four savanna elephant populations appear to have been lost since 2016. However, 19 of the 22 forest elephant populations are from west Africa, where many populations are small and fragmented.

34. It is noted that future surveys should prioritise west Africa and eastern Africa in particular, and areas with small elephant populations, as many population numbers were categorised as guesses as opposed to estimates. Notably, small populations may be very important from a species conservation perspective. There have been some areas where known range has increased due to better information from the field. More resources are needed for these range States to conduct systematic surveys.

35. The AFESR will present more than 270 new or updated estimates for elephant populations across Africa, with over 180 of these arising from systematic surveys. The draft AFESR notes that forest elephants were found in 22 range States, with a known and possible range of 947,200km^2. Surveys indicated an estimated total of 135,677 forest elephants, with an additional 7,030 to 8,726 elephants in areas not systematically surveyed. The preliminary findings in the draft AfESR indicate that central Africa has by far the largest number of forest elephants in any of the four African subregions.

36. The draft ASESR reports that savanna elephants are distributed across 24 African range States. Estimates for savanna elephant populations in four range States as of November 2022 were included in information document CoP 19 Inf. 64 (Rev.1). These estimates will be updated in the ASESR 2023.

Asian elephant population status

37. The Asian elephant (*Elephas maximus)* is distributed in 13 countries across south Asia and southeast Asia, with nearly 60% of the population found in India. While the Asian elephant population is estimated to be 30,000 to 50,000, in most cases this estimate is not based on sound data and is largely compiled from historic reports. The region also has approximately 15,000 Asian elephants in captivity. The largest single population of captive elephants is in Myanmar and numbers about 6,000 individuals.

38. Although the overall Asian elephant population appears to remain stable, the further decline of elephant populations, in comparison to 2019 population estimates, in Bangladesh, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the State of Sabah in Malaysia and Myanmar, is of concern. In particular, the small wild elephant populations (less than 500 individuals) remaining in Bangladesh (260), Cambodia (400-600), China (300), Nepal (227) and Viet Nam (104-134) are troubling.

39. In many of the Asian elephant range States, forest loss and agricultural expansion, conversion to plantations, logging, industrial and linear infrastructure developments, and mining have put pressure on the remaining Asian elephant populations. The populations have likely declined due to habitat loss, illegal killing, capture of live elephants for the timber industry and other purposes, consequences of severe human-elephant

conflict, and poaching for their ivory, skin, and meat. Persistent poaching across several landscapes contributes to selective removal of males, while recent reports of poaching for skin suggest additional emerging threats which put pressure on females and juveniles as well. Evidence from available literature indicates that illegal killing of wild elephants for their products is among the greatest threats to the future of Myanmar's elephant population.

40. Poaching of elephants for the ivory trade is not a major concern in Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and Sri Lanka. There are no online ivory trade markets in these countries. Trade in live elephants occurs in Nepal, Myanmar, India, Sri Lanka, and Thailand. Nepal is primarily a destination for live elephant trade; commercial trade of elephants is not allowed but they can be gifted.

41. The IUCN AsESG has been working to develop protocols in the form of guidelines and manuals to guide the management of specific matters confronting elephant conservation in an effective and scientific manner. The AsESG has currently nine working groups to develop outcome documents for the long-term conservation of Asian elephants. In March 2023, the AsESG released the first edition of the Action Elephant, a compendium of six National Elephant Conservation Action Plans. This includes the updated National Elephant Conservation Action Plans of Bangladesh (2018), Bhutan (2018), Cambodia (2020), the Lao People's Democratic Republic (2022), Myanmar (2018) and the State of Sabah in Malaysia (2020).

African Elephant Fund (AEF) and implementation of the African Elephant Action Plan

42. Progress is reported by the African Elephant Fund Steering Committee (AEFSC) through its Chair (Chad) in Annex 2 (paragraphs 270 to 293). Since the start of the AEF in 2010, 61 projects have been completed in African elephant range States in support of the implementation of the African Elephant Action Plan (AEAP).

43. As a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the AEF issued an emergency call for proposals to provide funding to range States to address elephant conservation challenges related to the pandemic. A package of 19 project proposals was approved by the AEFSC, of which 14 have been completed as of June 2023.

44. The review of the AEAP was initiated in 2018. Several consultative meetings and discussions were held to gather views and expert opinions on the recommended revisions to the Plan. The IUCN AfESG provided detailed technical inputs in order to reflect the current realities in the conservation of the African elephant. The technical inputs informed part of the discussions by the African elephant range States who shared their views on the current plan and proposed changes during a meeting convened by the United Nations Environment Programme in November 2019 in Nairobi, Kenya. The review process was interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic and reinitiated in 2022. An online briefing was held on the draft revised AEAP with African elephant range States in February 2023. A final draft was circulated for approval via a no-objection procedure by 31 March 2023. The revised AEAP (2023) was approved to guide elephant conservation actions across the continent for the next five years and is available as an information document to the present meeting .

45. The most significant changes to the AEAP are the reprioritization of the first three objectives, which puts reducing human-elephant conflict as the first priority objective. In addition, the two species classification of the African elephant (savanna elephant and forest elephant) was recognized in the revised AEAP.

46. The AEFSC invites the Standing Committee to note the approval of the revised AEAP by the African elephant range States. The AEFSC continues to call upon governments, donors, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations to contribute financial resources to the African Elephant Fund to support the implementation of the revised AEAP.

Part 2: Implementation of Decisions 19.94 and 19.95 on the *Implementation of priority recommendations from the review of the ETIS programme*

47. At CoP19, Parties adopted Decisions 19.94 to 19.96 on the *Implementation of the priority recommendations from the review of the ETIS programme*, which included several high and medium priorities for implementation by CoP20 (see Annex 3 to document CoP19 Doc. 21). The Decisions are included in Annex 1 to the present document for ease of reference.

48. In response to Decision 19.94, the ETIS report (Annex 2, paragraphs 31 to 75, to the present document) includes measures taken to address the recommendations on ETIS data validation (recommendations 5 and 8); resource mobilization (recommendation 18); appropriateness of ETIS data (recommendations 19 and

28); and covariate exploration as part of modelling improvements for the ETIS analysis (recommendation 24).

49. To address recommendations relating to ETIS data validation, the ETIS report details changes made to ETIS Online to accommodate the ETIS data validation and confirmation process and provides a data workflow for submission of data from Management Authorities (MAs) and other sources (non-MA). The resulting validation and confirmation system is designed to enhance ETIS Online; provide transparency for Parties; and promote bilateral and inter-agency law enforcement collaboration and exchange of information to better understand illegal ivory trade activities.

50. With respect to the recommendation on resource mobilization for ETIS, TRAFFIC reported current funding sources and noted budget shortfalls for the ETIS programme for calendar years 2024 – 2026. It was noted that funds secured were not sufficient to maintain the minimum required operation of the programme in the coming years. The Secretariat discusses this matter in more detail in document SC77 Doc. 63.2 on *Financial and operational sustainability of the MIKE and ETIS Programmes* on the implementation of Decisions 19.35 to 19.37.

51. In terms of the review of the appropriateness of ETIS data, the detailed analyses on data sources submitted by Parties and the modelling results excluding non-MA data suggest that, for some Parties, the non-MA data is the only source of information, including for those Parties engaged in the National Ivory Action Plan (NIAP) process. The report proposes that Parties with large proportions of non-MA data informing their ETIS analyses could increase their engagement with ETIS to regularly submit their seizure data and to validate existing and future non-MA data with the validation and confirmation process put in place.

52. To address the recommendation on covariate exploration, TRAFFIC presented a new approach for the ETIS report covariate as part of the bias-adjustment on reporting rates in the ETIS trend models. It was noted that the old covariate categorization approach was no longer adequate as Parties submit data on EITS Online and not through targeted in-country data-collecting missions. A new approach for the ETIS reporting covariate was explored as a ratio of MA reported records. Examination of the two approaches showed good overlap of the two covariates and no major change in ETIS trends.

53. In addition to the actions taken to address the recommendations listed in the ETIS report, the Secretariat is moving forward to address the recommendations assigned to it, where funds have been made available to implement the recommendations. As indicated in paragraph 28, the Secretariat is proposing some amendments to the *Guidelines for the preparation and submission of CITES annual illegal trade reports* and *Guidelines for the preparation and submission of CITES annual illegal trade report* (see document SC77 Doc. 32.2), to implement the recommendations on the alignment/reconciliation of data of the annual illegal trade report and the ETIS report. Alignment of these reports or data will enable implementation of the recommendation relating to leveraging synergies with other UN and global agencies (recommendation 13). The Secretariat is working with TRAFFIC to include an option in the ETIS forms (Word, Excel and Online) for Parties to indicate if they do not want their ETIS data made available to the members of the International Consortium on Combatting Wildlife Crime (ICCWC) for global research and analysis.

54. The following recommendations require additional external funds and therefore implementation has not been initiated:

    a) the revision of the MIKE and ETIS TAG Terms of Reference and associated financial provisions (recommendation 15);

    b) the feasibility assessment for alternative supporting mechanisms for ETIS (recommendation 16); and

    c) the minimum financial requirements of ETIS (recommendations 17 and 18).

55. With regard to the recommendation to examine the relationship between ivory stockpiles and illegal ivory trade (recommendation 31), the Secretariat is working on consolidating ivory stockpile data into a database, which will assist the Secretariat, TRAFFIC and the TAG to further assess the feasibility of implementing this recommendation.

Part 3: Implementation of Decisions 19.99 and 19.100 on *Ivory seizures and domestic ivory markets*

56. Decisions 19.99 to 19.101 (see Annex 1 to the present document) direct the Secretariat to consult with the MIKE-ETIS TAG and TRAFFIC on the feasibility of an analysis of ETIS data connected to each Party with a legal domestic ivory market for commercial trade.

57. To address Decision 19.99, following consultation with the MIKE-ETIS TAG, TRAFFIC conducted a survey of all CITES documents related to domestic ivory markets for the last decade, and collated information on the Parties' responses to CITES Notifications and their reporting on the status of their elephant ivory markets, as well as on the results from a study commissioned by the CITES Secretariat regarding Decision 17.87 on *Domestic markets for frequently illegally traded specimens*. During the second session of its annual meeting held on 10 August 2023, the TAG noted that there were differences in how Parties interpret the meaning of a legal domestic market, as some Parties may not consider that they have a legal domestic market for elephant ivory, but may still allow some exemptions to otherwise prohibited trade.

58. The TAG raised a number of concerns regarding the purpose of the analysis requested in Decision 19.99, on ivory seizures connected to each Party with a legal domestic market for commercial trade in ivory. It was noted that some form of comparison or contrast would be needed to study the impact of legal domestic markets on the illegal ivory trade, but it was unclear which markets to focus on and what data could be used, given that relevant data submitted to ETIS (e.g. trade routes) may be incomplete, and that there is a low response rate from Parties to the domestic ivory market surveys conducted by the CITES Secretariat (see paragraph 62 below). Further, it was not clear whether such an analysis could provide real added value, in addition to the existing ETIS analyses that are done for consideration by the Standing Committee and the Conference of Parties. The TAG proposed that there might instead be opportunities to link the requests in Decision 19.99 to Decisions 19.97 and 19.98 on *ETIS categorization of Parties*, by considering the inclusion of data related to legal domestic ivory markets into the categorization criteria of Parties. However, further clarifications would be needed as to which legal domestic ivory markets or criteria data to include.

59. Given the large variability noted in the understanding of what constitutes legal domestic ivory markets and the questions on the purpose of the requested analyses of ETIS data, the MIKE-ETIS TAG determined that clarification would be needed on the criteria to be used to identify countries with a legal domestic ivory market, and that clearer guidance would be needed on the research questions to be addressed using ETIS or other more detailed domestic ivory market data.

Part 4: Implementation of Decisions 18.117 (Rev. CoP19) and 18.118 on *Closure of domestic ivory markets*

60. The Secretariat issued Notification to the Parties No. 2023/077 of 10 July 2023 requesting Parties to report to the Secretariat the information required in Decision 18.117 (Rev CoP19). Parties were encouraged to take into consideration all relevant provisions contained in Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP19) and in other relevant Resolutions. Seven reports were submitted by the following Parties: the European Union (EU-coordinated reply), Japan, South Africa, Thailand, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Zimbabwe.

61. The submissions included information on existing legislation and monitoring and on enforcement and awareness raising measures, among others. The EU and its Member States reported that further steps aimed at banning most forms of trade in ivory had been taken. The European Commission had adopted revised guidance on the EU regime governing trade in ivory to assist in comprehension and application of the rules concerning ivory trade. Japan provided information on legal, enforcement and awareness raising measures, as well as information relating to international cooperation and privately held stocks. Thailand provided information on existing legislation and measures taken to improve monitoring and understanding of the domestic ivory trade, including the application of a non-destructive method to investigate the composition of ivory, and a study of the ivory supply chain in Thailand. South Africa reported on the number of ivory seizures of raw and worked ivory in 2021, as well as the numbers of illegally killed elephants in 2021 and 2022. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK) reported that primary legislation had come into force which puts in place a strict domestic ivory sales ban with limited exemptions. The UK Government intends to extend the legislation to hippopotamus, walrus, narwhal, killer whale (orca) and sperm whale. The United States of America provided information on regulations in place to ensure a near-total ban on domestic trade in elephant ivory, indicating the limited exceptions permitted. Zimbabwe submitted information relating to the legislative framework in place, including the licensing and registration system used to regulate ivory manufacturers and other involved in the ivory supply chain. No Parties reported on e-commerce (trade linked to the Internet).

62. The Secretariat notes that reporting related to domestic ivory markets yields few responses. It was first requested at the 69th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC69; Geneva, November 2017) (see summary record SC69 SR). Responses were received to the following Notifications No. 2017/077 (twelve Parties submitted information[2]); No. 2020/026 (eight Parties submitted information[3]) and No. 2021/005 (four Parties submitted information, two of which were updates to the responses sent to Notification No. 2020/026[4]). The seven Parties that responded to Notification No. 2023/077 have also submitted reports in response to one or more of the previous Notifications.

63. Submissions received in response to Notification No. 2023/077 are contained in Annex 3 to the present document (in English only and in the format as received) for consideration by the Standing Committee. The Secretariat would like to thank the Parties for the reports they submitted.

Part 5: MIKE and ETIS Subgroup of the Standing Committee

64. The MIKE Subgroup was first established by the Standing Committee at its 41st meeting (SC41; Geneva, February 1999) to oversee further the development, refinement and implementation of the programme known as Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE). At its 49th meeting (SC49; Geneva, April 2003), the mandate of the Subgroup was expanded to include ETIS. At the 76th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC76; Panama, November 2022), the Standing Committee reconstituted the MIKE and ETIS Subgroup with the following composition:

    - *Four African elephant range States (2 anglophone and 2 francophone): Chad, Kenya, Senegal and Zambia;*

    - *Two Asian elephant range States: China and Indonesia; and*

    - *Two representatives from Europe and North America: Belgium and United States of America.*

65. The Standing Committee may wish to refer MIKE and ETIS matters to the Subgroup for consideration, such as the proposed guidance for Parties on addressing the definition of domestic ivory markets and the research questions to be addressed using ETIS data.

Conclusions

66. The report in Annex 2 provides an update since the 74th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC74; Lyon, March 2022) (see document SC74 Doc. 68, Annex 1) on the levels of illegal killing of elephants, illegal and legal trade in elephant specimens, the status of elephant populations, and the implementation of the AEAP supported through the AEF.

67. The Secretariat notes that reporting by range States on MIKE and by Parties on ETIS has improved in quality over the last few years and that the online systems (MIKE Online Database and ETIS Online) provide a valuable means to facilitate timely data submission. Parties should be encouraged to continue to make use of these online platforms to meet the reporting requirements.

68. The Secretariat notes that the continued downward PIKE trend in Africa is encouraging, concurrently with less seizures reported under ETIS, although insights on trends on illegal trade in ivory are pending further analysis. Targeted action and commitment by all actors must be sustained to ensure illegal killing and trade do not increase. The release of the upcoming status reports for the African forest elephants and African savanna elephants during the course of 2023 will be important in this context.

69. The Secretariat notes the need to prioritize west Africa and eastern Africa and areas with small elephant populations in future surveys, and the need for resources to carry out these surveys. At SC74, the Standing Committee encouraged donors and partners to support African elephant range States to conduct and fund surveys of elephant populations and encouraged Parties to provide funding to the African Elephant Fund for the implementation of the African Elephant Action Plan (see summary record SC74 SR). The Secretariat also notes with concern the declines in Asian elephant populations in some countries in southeast Asia.

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[2] *Responses were shared with the Standing Committee in an Annex to document SC70 Doc 49.1 (SC70 Doc. 49.1 Annex 2).*

[3] *https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/sc/74/E-SC74-39.pdf*

[4] *https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/sc/74/E-SC74-39.pdf*

70. The Secretariat encourages Parties to participate in the ETIS data validation process and to respond to Notifications to the Parties in this regard, such as Notification to the Parties No 2023/082. The Secretariat commends the progress made to date in implementing ETIS review recommendations and encourages Parties to close funding gaps to enable the full implementation of the ETIS review recommendations.

71. The Secretariat notes the recommendations from the MIKE-ETIS TAG and TRAFFIC for further clarification on Decision 19.99 and proposes that guidance be provided by the Standing Committee on what constitutes a legal domestic ivory market, and the research questions to be addressed with ETIS data, to inform whether an analysis would be feasible.

72. The Secretariat draws attention to the guidance to standardize reporting of hunting trophies included in the *Guidelines for the preparation and submission of CITES annual report*s and the need for more consistent application of the *Guidelines* by Parties, as noted in previous reports by UNEP-WCMC.

73. In light of the approval of the revised AEAP by African elephant range States, the Secretariat recommends that the Standing Committee take note of the revised Plan, and the need for coordinated action to address issues of human-elephant conflict, which are an increasing concern in many range States.

74. The Secretariat notes the limited number of responses that were submitted in response to the latest Notification to the Parties issued relating to the closure of domestic ivory markets. The limited available information presents difficulties in informing decision-making related to the closure of domestic ivory markets. As no Parties reported on e-commerce (trade linked to the Internet), this may be an area that requires further attention.

Recommendations

75. The Standing Committee is invited to:

    a) take note of the downward PIKE trend in Africa and the lower number of seizures reported under ETIS and commend the efforts of elephant range States and other Parties and partners, in supporting actions to maintain this positive trend;

    b) encourage elephant range States to continue to use the MIKE Online Database for MIKE data submission and Parties to use ETIS Online to submit seizure information;

    c) encourage Parties to participate in the ETIS data validation process, including through response to Notifications to the Parties on this matter;

    d) request TRAFFIC to include an option in the ETIS forms (Word, Excel and Online) for Parties to indicate if they do not want their ETIS data made available to the members of the International Consortium on Combatting Wildlife Crime (ICCWC) for global research and analysis;

    e) provide guidance on the criteria to be used to identify countries with legal domestic ivory markets, and the research questions to be addressed with ETIS data, to further inform the consideration by the MIKE-ETIS TAG of the feasibility of such an analysis; and

    f) welcome the revised African Elephant Action Plan approved by African range States.

COP19 DECISIONS ASSOCIATED WITH RESOLUTION CONF. 10.10 (REV. COP19)

Implementation of the priority recommendations from the review of the ETIS programme

Directed to the Secretariat

19.94 *Subject to the availability of external funding, the Secretariat shall work with TRAFFIC to, in consultation with the MIKE and ETIS Technical Advisory Group (TAG) where required, implement the high and medium priority recommendations in Annex 3 to document CoP19 Doc. 21.*

19.95 *The Secretariat shall report progress made with the implementation of the high and medium priority recommendations in Annex 3 to document CoP19 Doc. 21 and make any other recommendations emanating from the implementation to the Standing Committee.*

Directed to the Standing Committee

19.96 *The Standing Committee shall review the report provided by the Secretariat in accordance with Decision 19.95 and make recommendations to improve the ETIS system and the use of its results for consideration at the 20th meeting of the Conference the Parties.*

Ivory seizures and domestic ivory markets

Directed to the Secretariat

19.99 *Subject to external funding, the Secretariat shall engage the MIKE and ETIS Technical Advisory Group and TRAFFIC to advise whether an analysis of ivory seizures connected to each Party with a legal domestic market for commercial trade in ivory could be undertaken and, if feasible, carry out the analysis and include the results in the ETIS report to the Standing Committee at its 78th meeting, and to the 20th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.*

19.100 *The Secretariat shall report on progress made with respect to the analysis in Decision 19.99 to the 77th meeting of the Standing Committee.*

Directed to the Standing Committee

19.101 *The Standing Committee shall consider the Secretariat's report under Decision 19.100 and request the Secretariat to take appropriate measures, if any.*

Closure of domestic ivory markets

Directed to Parties

18.117 (Rev. CoP19) *Parties that have not closed their domestic markets for commercial trade in raw and worked ivory are requested to report to the Secretariat for consideration by the Standing Committee at its 77th and 78th meetings on what measures they are taking to ensure that their domestic ivory markets are not contributing to poaching or illegal trade.*

Directed to the Secretariat

18.118 *The Secretariat shall compile the reports and make them available to Parties in advance of the Standing Committee meetings.*

Directed to the Standing Committee

18.119 (Rev. CoP19) *The Standing Committee shall:*

a) consider the reports under Decision 18.118; and

b) report on this matter and make recommendations, as appropriate and consistent with the scope and mandate of the Convention, to the 20th meeting of Conference of the Parties.

LEVELS OF ILLEGAL KILLING OF ELEPHANTS, ILLEGAL AND LEGAL TRADE IN ELEPHANT SPECIMENS, THE STATUS OF ELEPHANT POPULATIONS AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AFRICAN ELEPHANT ACTION PLAN:

A REPORT TO THE CITES STANDING COMMITTEE

Introduction

1. Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP19) on *Trade in elephant specimens*, in paragraph 12, directs the Secretariat, pending the necessary external funding, to:

   a) *report on information and analyses provided by MIKE and ETIS at each meeting of the Conference of the Parties and, subject to the availability of adequate new MIKE or ETIS data, at relevant meetings of the Standing Committee; and, in collaboration with TRAFFIC as appropriate, provide other reports, updates or information on MIKE and ETIS as required by the Conference of the Parties, the Standing Committee, the MIKE and ETIS Technical Advisory Group (TAG) or Parties;*

   b) *prior to relevant meetings of the Standing Committee, invite the United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) to provide an overview of trade in elephant specimens as recorded in the CITES database; the IUCN Species Survival Commission (IUCN/SSC) African and Asian Elephant Specialist Groups to submit any new and relevant information on the conservation status of elephants, pertinent conservation actions and management strategies; and African elephant range States to provide information on progress made in the implementation of the African Elephant Action Plan; and*

   c) *on the basis of the information specified in paragraphs a) and b) above, recommend actions for consideration by the Conference of the Parties or the Standing Committee;*

2. This is the eighth report prepared by the organizations for the CITES Standing Committee, with previous reports having been provided for SC61 (Geneva, August 2011), SC62 (Geneva, July 2012), SC65 (Geneva, July 2014), SC66 (Geneva, January 2016), SC69 (Geneva, November 2017), SC70 (Sochi, October 2018) and SC74 (Lyon, March 2022).

Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephant

3. This section has been prepared by the CITES Secretariat.

Background

4. The CITES programme for Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants, commonly known as MIKE, was established by the Conference of the Parties (CoP) to CITES at its 10th Meeting (Harare, 1997) and is conducted in accordance with the provisions in Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP18) on *Trade in elephant specimens*. The CITES MIKE Programme is managed by the CITES Secretariat under the supervision of the CITES Standing Committee. Since implementation began in 2001, the operation of the programme in Africa has been possible mainly thanks to the generous financial support of the European Union.

5. The CITES MIKE programme aims to inform and improve decision-making on elephants by measuring trends in levels of illegal killing of elephants, identifying factors associated with those trends, and building capacity for elephant management in range States. It operates in a large sample of sites spread across elephant range in 32 countries in Africa and 13 countries in Asia. There are 69 designated MIKE sites in Africa and 30 sites in Asia.

6. MIKE data is collected by law enforcement and ranger patrols in the field and through other means in designated MIKE sites. When an elephant carcass is found, site personnel try to establish the cause of death and other details, such as sex and age of the animal, status of ivory and stage of decomposition of the carcass. This information is recorded in standardized carcass forms, details of which are then submitted to the CITES MIKE Programme.

7. The programme evaluates relative poaching levels based on the Proportion of Illegally Killed Elephants (PIKE), which is calculated on an annual basis as the number of illegally killed elephants found, divided by the total number of elephant carcasses found, which includes elephants illegally killed, elephants that died of natural causes, management-related deaths as well as deaths recorded as unknown (cause of death could not be determined).

8. The need for more comprehensive reporting on human-elephant conflict-related death has been brought to the attention of range States. For 2022, of the 1832 records reported for Africa, 330 records (18%) were related to human-elephant conflict (HEC) incidence, 1393 records (76%) were not related to HEC, and 109 records (6%) were missing information. The breakdown was similar in 2021; out of 1326 records, 18% (237 records) were related to HEC, 66% (877 records) were not related to HEC, and the remaining 15% (212 records) were missing information. The type of death associated with human-elephant conflict related incidences were either “illegal” or “management”, and remained relatively unchanged, with 49% (2021) and 36% (2022) categorized as "illegal”, and 59% (2021) and 62% (2022) categorized as "management". The highest cause of "Illegal" deaths was "Gunshot," accounting for 70% (2021) and 82% (2022), while "spear" accounted for 13% (2021) and 20% (2022). The highest reported "management" related death was "problem animal control" accounting for over 91% in both years, while "self-defense" represented just below 3%. For Asia, of the 188 records reported in 2022, 14 (7%) were related to HEC, 18 (15%) were not related to HEC and 146 (77%) were missing information. In 2021, out of 197 records 12% (24 records) were related to HEC, 27% (54 records) were not related to HEC, and 60% were missing information. Across both years, 31 records were reported as "illegal" HEC incidences, with 13 records (42%) indicating "electrocution" as the cause of death. Since PIKE is an index of poaching, whether conflict-related death is categorized as illegal or not needs further examination for each range State. The CITES Secretariat has continued to collaborate with participating range States and the MIKE-ETIS Technical Advisory Group (TAG) to get further clarification on this matter and refine the MIKE analysis accordingly.

9. PIKE is an index of poaching pressure and provides trends relating to the levels of poaching. It may be affected by several potential biases related to data quality, reporting rate, carcass detection probabilities, variation in natural mortality rates and other factors, and hence results need to be interpreted with caution.

10. In the MIKE report for Africa and Asia, published on the CITES website on 16 November 2020, the new PIKE trend analysis methodology was shared with CITES Parties. As indicated in that report, the TAG recommended the use of the unweighted Bayesian GLMM (**MM.p.uw**) to interpret PIKE trends over time. A weighted Bayesian GLMM (**MM.p.w**) model that includes elephant population estimates from each MIKE site was trialled on an experimental basis but requires further work by the CITES Secretariat to be carried out in collaboration with the TAG. The technical materials and R-code utilized from 2020 onwards can be accessed through the list of GitHub repositories provided in Annex 2

Continental PIKE trend analysis – Afric

11. The data set used for this analysis consists of 25,232 records of elephant carcasses found between 2003 and the end of 2022 at 67 MIKE sites in 31 range States in Africa, representing a total of 854 site-years.

12. The PIKE trend analysis presented in this document considers an additional 1,832 records of elephant carcasses encountered in the course of 2022, that were reported by 59 MIKE sites across 30 range States in Africa (see Figure 1).

13. In 2022, reports were received from 11 of 16 sites (68%) in central Africa; 14 of 16 sites (87%) in eastern Africa; 19 of 19 sites (100%) in southern Africa, and 15 of 18 sites (83%) in west Africa. Of the sites that reported, two in central Africa, one in southern Africa and eleven in west Africa reported zero carcasses found in 2022. Five sites were unable to report in 2022 due to various reasons, such as insecurity which prevented patrols being carried out, or insufficient capacity to collect MIKE data. Two of these sites were located in central Africa, one in eastern Africa, and two in West Africa. Of these five sites, two sites reported in 2021 - one in West Africa and one in East Africa. Both sites reported zero carcasses, one with patrol information, one without. Whether there were no carcasses reported or none detected, it does not influence the PIKE trend analysis

14. There were 1,832 reported carcasses in 2022, an increase of 506 compared to 2021. 2022 marked an unusually high total number of carcasses, ranking as the second highest after the peak of 1,880 carcasses

reported in 2012 (Figure 1B). Due to extreme drought[5] conditions in 2022, specifically affecting two MIKE sites in Kenya, these sites had a 55% and 66% increase in total number of carcasses compared to 2021. One site saw an increase in "natural" deaths from 36% to 54% between 2021 and 2022, while the second site maintained a consistent rate of 65% "natural" deaths for both years for the same period. Other types of death (Management, Illegal, etc.) remained relative unchanged at both sites during the same period.

15. As stated in paragraph 8, the unweighted Bayesian GLMM approach (**MM.p.uw** - unweighted by elephant population estimate) is used to interpret PIKE trends.

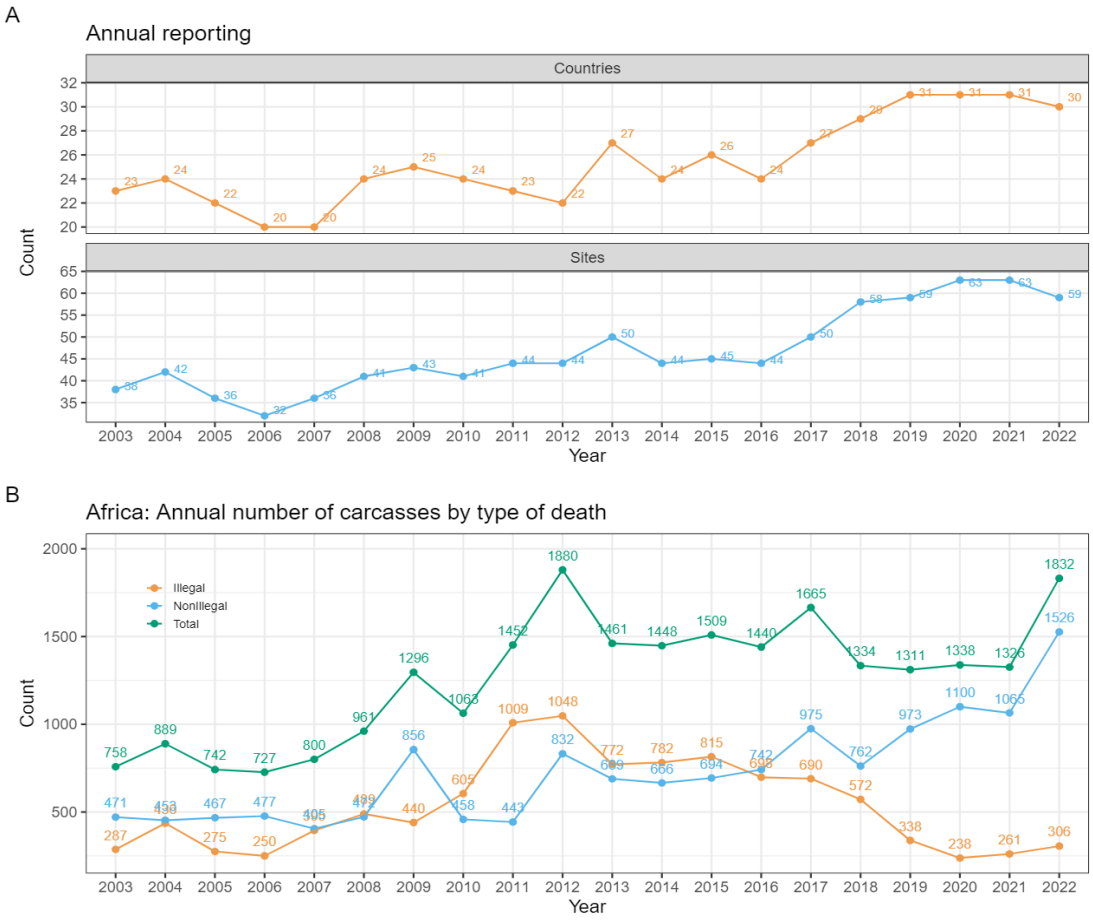

Figure 1: *A. Number of countries and MIKE sites that submitted reports (2003 – 2022). In 2022, the number of sites that reported from Central, Eastern, Southern and West Africa were 11, 14, 19 and 15, respectively. B. The total number of carcasses reported irrespective of cause of death (green), the number of carcasses of elephants illegally killed (orange) and the number not illegally killed (blue) (natural deaths, management related deaths and unknown type of death) reported by year.*

16. Figure 2 shows the continental PIKE estimate for Africa across years based on the unweighted Bayesian GLMM (**MM.p.uw**) analysis. The error bar or confidence/credible interval shows the level of uncertainty in the annual PIKE estimates. In Bayesian analysis, a 95 percent credible interval (CI) is an interval within which a PIKE estimate falls with a 95% probability

17. Between 2003 and 2010, the annual mean PIKE increased, reaching its highest point in 2011, and then followed a downward trend. Over the past five years, from 2018-2022, the continental PIKE trend shows a clear downward trend (for more details, refer to Annex 2 and the table containing statistical support for the downward trend). Over this period, the continental PIKE estimate went from 0.54 in 2018 to 0.33 in 2022. The PIKE estimate for 2022 represents the lowest value since 2003, with a value of 0.33 and a 95% confidence/credible interval ranging from 0.28 to 0.39.

[5] *See https://reliefweb.int/report/kenya/unicef-kenya-flash-situation-report-no-6-drought-october-2022 and https://biz.crast.net/kenyas-samburu-people-fight-for-survival-on-climate-change-front/*

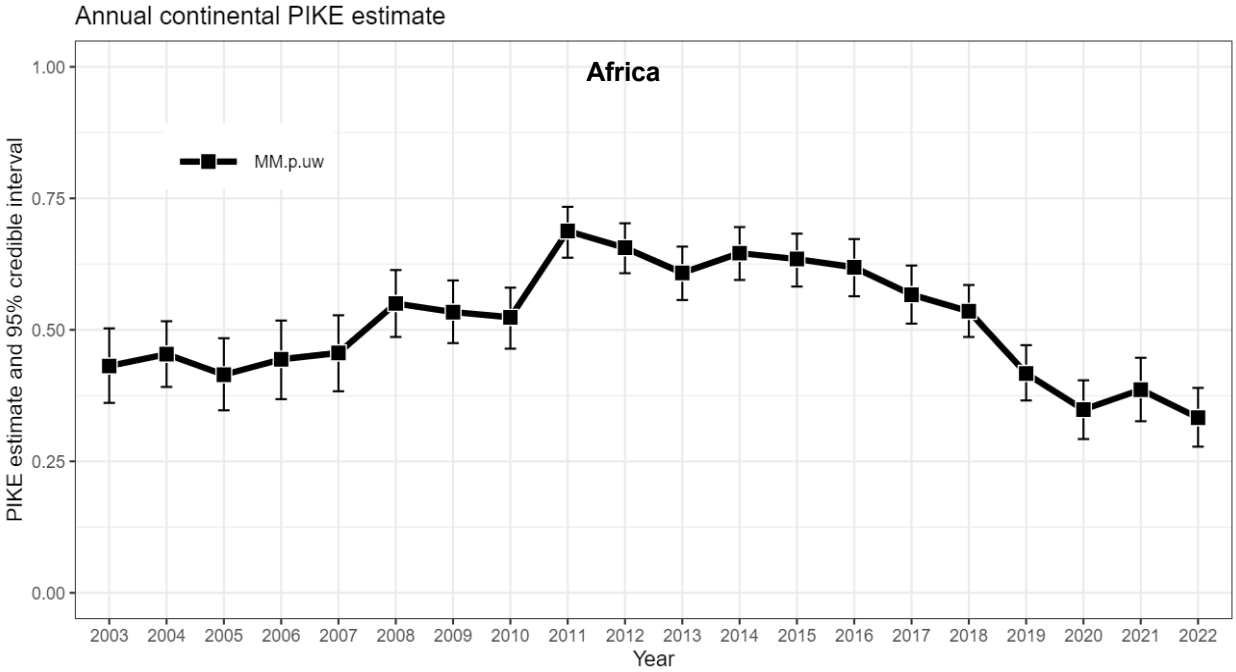

Figure 2: *Continental PIKE estimates for Africa based on the unweighted Bayesian GLMM approach (**MM.p.uw**). The error bar or the confidence / credible interval (95%) shows the level of uncertainty in the annual PIKE estimates.*

Subregional PIKE trends in Africa

18. Figure 3 (A-D) shows the subregional PIKE estimate across years based on the unweighted Bayesian GLMM (**MM.p.uw**) approach for central, eastern, southern and west Africa. The error bar or confidence/credible interval shows the level of uncertainty in the annual PIKE estimates. Results below show that the PIKE trend differs by subregion.

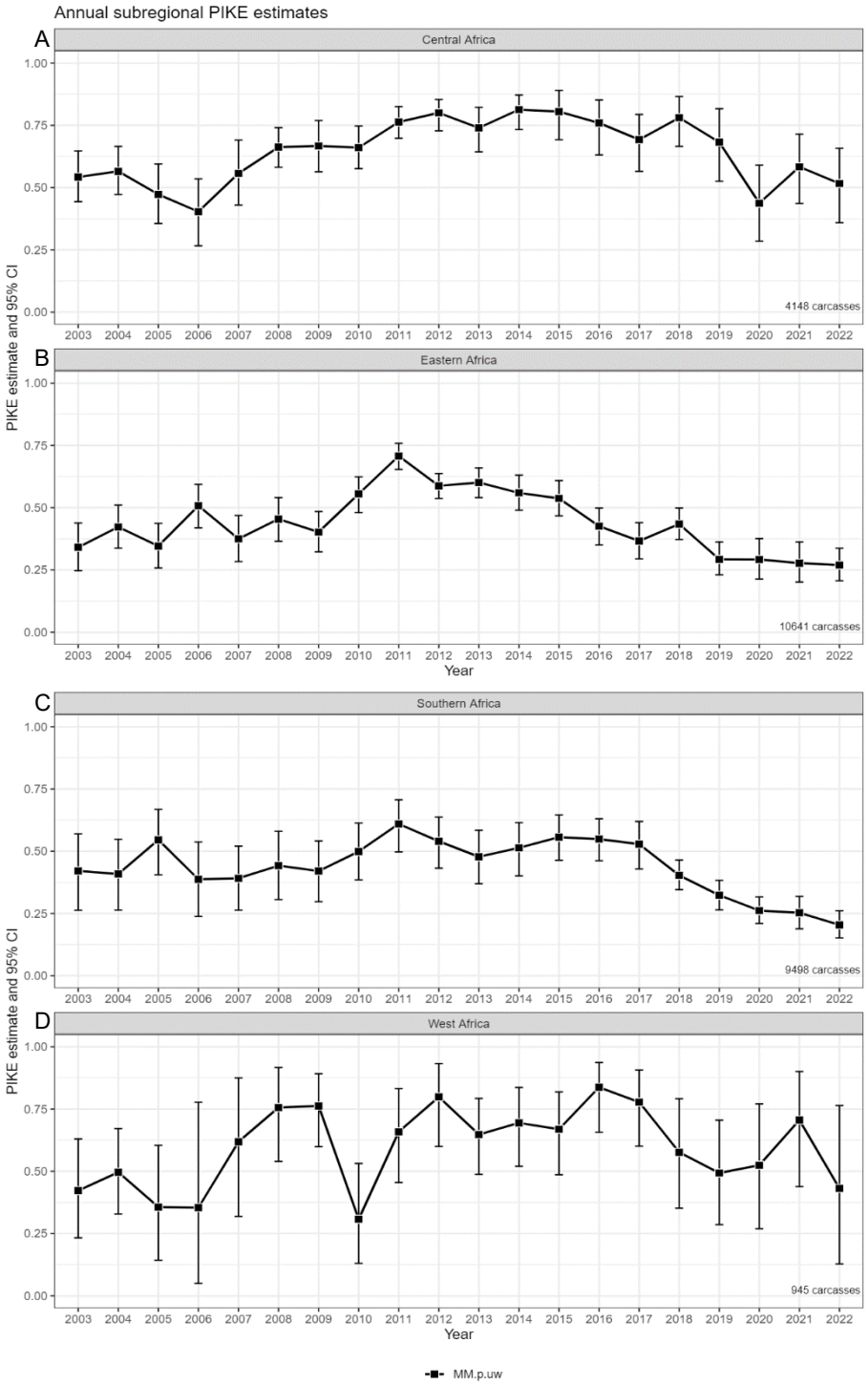

Figure 3*: Subregional PIKE estimates across years based on unweighted Bayesian GLMM approach. The error bar shows the level of uncertainty in the annual PIKE estimates and represent 95% credible intervals. The total number of carcasses (2003-2022) for each subregion is shown in the bottom right corner of each graph. A – central Africa; B – eastern Africa; C – southern Africa and D – west Africa.*

Central Africa

19. Figure 3-A shows the PIKE estimates for central Africa, obtained using the unweighted Bayesian GLMM approach. Based on previous analysis (refer to CoP19 Doc. 66.5), there is strong evidence that the PIKE trend increased from 2003 to 2011, followed by a period from 2011 to 2019 during which PIKE fluctuated around a value of 0.75, indicating it was relatively constant. The trend in the last five years (2018 – 2022) shows evidence of a downward trend (Table, Annex 2). The average PIKE estimate for central Africa in 2022 however remains high, with a value of 0.52 (range: 0.36 - 0.66), higher than the average 2022 continental PIKE estimate of 0.33 (range: 0.28 – 0.39).

Eastern Africa

20. Figure 3-B shows the PIKE estimates for eastern Africa. Broadly, the PIKE trend for the subregion aligns with the continental PIKE trend: an upward trend from 2003 to 2011, followed by a downward trend after 2011. In the last five years, from 2018 to 2022, there is a clear downward trend (Table, Annex 2). The unweighted PIKE estimate for eastern Africa in 2022 is 0.27 (range: 0.21 - 0.34) and falls below the 2022 average continental PIKE estimate of 0.33 (range: 0.28 – 0.39).

Southern Africa

21. Southern Africa's PIKE estimates can be seen in Figure 3-C. Throughout the period of the last five years, from 2018 to 2022, there is a clear downward trend (Table, Annex 2). Over this period, the subregional PIKE estimate went from 0.40 in 2018 to 0.20 in 2022. The unweighted PIKE estimate for southern Africa in 2022 is 0.20 (range: 0.15 - 0.26) and is below the 2022 average continental PIKE estimate of 0.33 (range: 0.28 – 0.39).

West Africa

22. Figure 3-D displays the PIKE estimates for west Africa. The subregion is typically known for having small populations of African elephants, and this, along with other factors, influences the number of carcasses found annually. In 2022, a total of 12 carcasses were reported in the region, originating from four sites, while the remaining 11 sites reported no detection of any carcasses despite patrol efforts being carried out.

23. Due to the small number of carcasses reported over a 20-year period (2002 – 2022), which amounts to a total of 945 records (Figure 3-D), inferring a subregional pattern is challenging. The limited sample size leads to increased uncertainty in PIKE estimates, resulting in wider confidence/credible intervals. A notable decrease in PIKE can be seen between 2021 and 2022, with the value decreasing from 0.71 (range: 0.44 – 0.90) in 2021 to 0.43 (range: 0.13 – 0.76) in 2022; however, it remains within the confidence/credible interval of the 2021 estimate, signifying no significant change in the PIKE estimate between the two years. Over the last five years (2018 - 2022), there is no statistical evidence to support a downward trend (Table, Annex 2). The unweighted PIKE estimate in west Africa in 2022 is 0.43 (range: 0.13 – 0.76), higher than the average continental PIKE estimate of 0.33 (range: 0.28 – 0.39).

Asia PIKE Trend Analysis

24. The data set used for Asia PIKE trend analysis consists of 4554 records of elephant carcasses found between 2003 and the end of 2022 at 30 MIKE sites in 13 range States in Asia, representing a total of 310 site-years. Approximately 94% (=4275/4554) of the carcasses are from MIKE sites in south Asia and the remaining 6% (=279/4544) from MIKE sites in southeast Asia. It should be noted that more than 70% of Asian elephants occur in south Asia. In 2022, of the 27 sites, 13 sites reported from south Asia and 14 sites from southeast Asia. Zero carcasses were reported in a total of nine sites, with one site in south Asia and eight sites in southeast Asia in 2022.

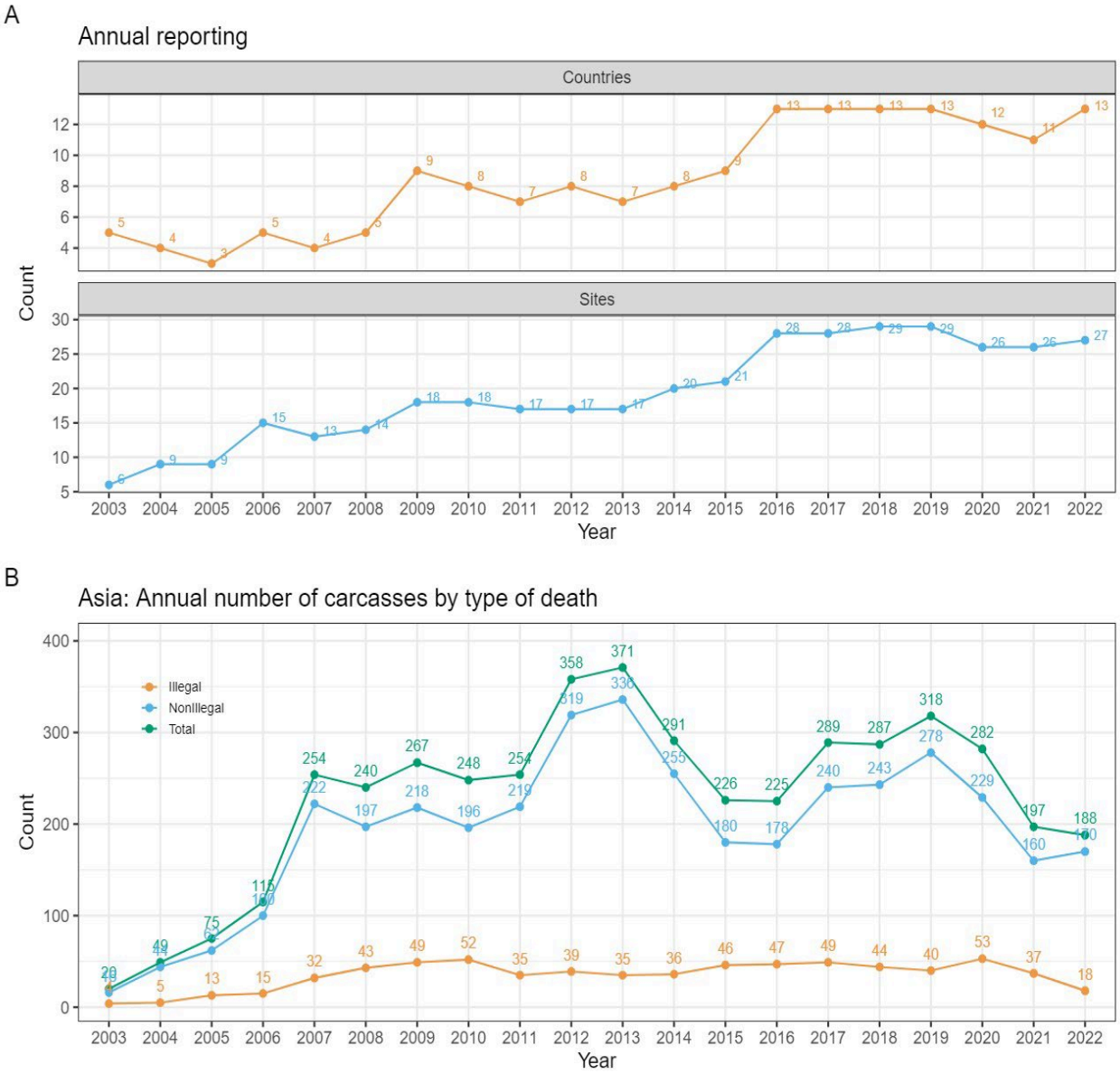

Figure 4: *(A) Total number of countries and sites that submitted reports by year. (B) The total number of carcasses reported irrespective of cause of death (green), the number of carcasses of elephants illegally killed (orange) and the number not illegally killed (blue) (natural deaths, management related deaths, unknown type of death) reported by year.*

25. The PIKE trend analysis presented in this document considers an additional 188 records of elephant carcasses encountered in the course of 2022, that were reported by 27 MIKE sites in Asia (Figure 4-A). The total number of carcasses reported slightly decreased between 2021 and 2022, with 197 reported in 2021 and 188 in 2022.The number of carcasses reported as illegally killed decreased from 37 in 2021 to 18 in 2022. In Asia, illegal killing of elephants is generally associated with human-elephant conflict and, in some cases, illegal killing for elephant specimens (ivory and skin) (Gosling J. 2018, Sampson et al. 2018). The detailed MIKE data does not reflect this information and the MIKE Programme continues to work with range States to ensure reporting includes details relating to the role of conflict in elephant deaths.

26. Figure 5 shows the continental PIKE estimate across years based on the unweighted Bayesian GLMM (**MM.p.uw**) analysis. The error bar or confidence/credible interval shows the level of uncertainty in the annual PIKE estimates. In Bayesian analysis, a 95 percent credible interval (CI) is an interval within which PIKE falls with a 95% probability. The notable change in PIKE from 0.37 (range: 0.27-0.47) in 2021 to 0.21 (range: 0.13 – 0.30) in 2022 remains within the confidence/credible interval of the 2021 estimate, indicating no significant change or difference between the two PIKE estimates. The last five-year average value for PIKE is 0.32, and for 2022, the unweighted PIKE estimate is 0.21 (range: 0.13 - 0.30).

27. For Asia, trend analysis is not reported by subregion because a disproportionately large number of records are from South Asia, as stated above. Within south Asia approximately 96% of the records (4,124 carcass records) are from MIKE sites in India, which holds the largest population of Asian elephants.

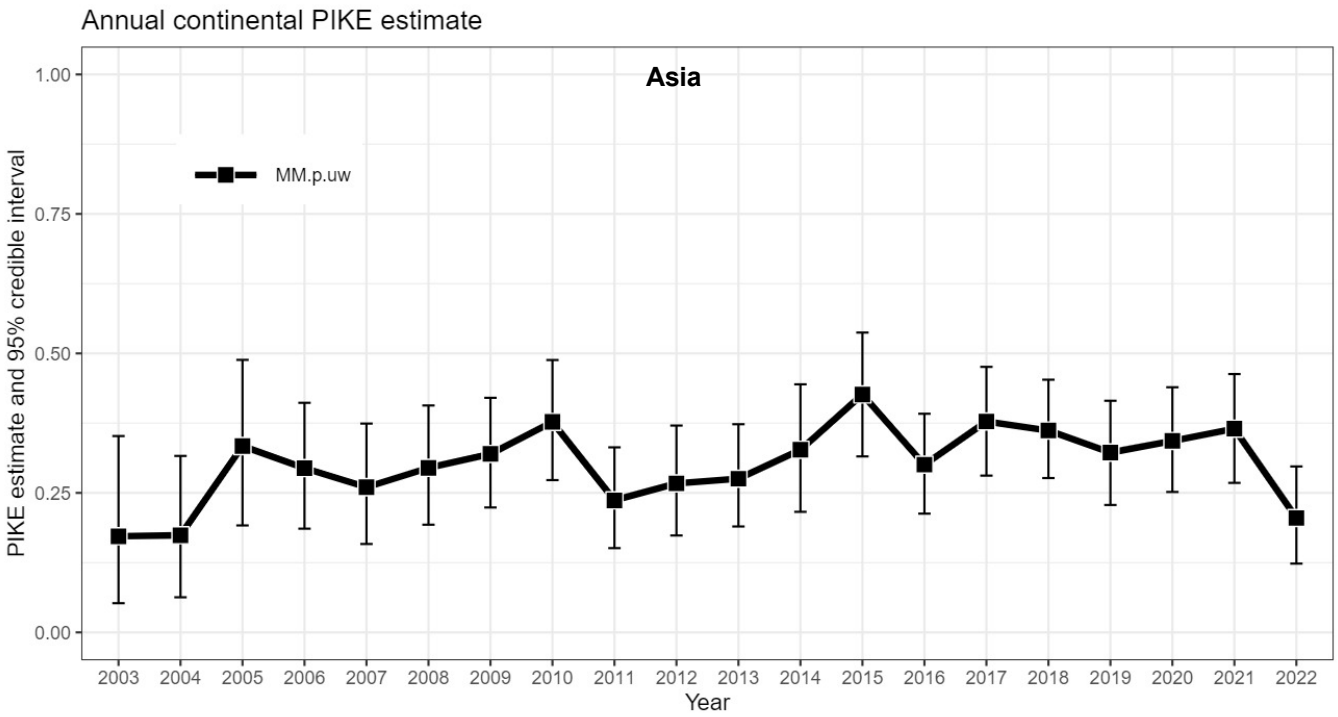

Figure 5: *Continental PIKE estimates for Asia, based on the unweighted Bayesian GLMM approach (**MM.p.uw**). The error bar or the confidence / credible interval shows the level of uncertainty in the annual PIKE estimates.*

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28. In the table below, the slope estimate (third column) represents the average annual change of PIKE from 2018 to 2022. A negative value indicates a downward trend, while a positive value suggests an upward trend. The credible interval represents the range of possible slope values with 95% certainty.

29. A linear temporal regression model with data from the posterior PIKE estimates of the last five years is used to estimate the slope and its distribution. The probability, or support, of a downward trend is derived from a distribution of slope estimates. The probability of a negative trend is the proportion of fitted slopes that are less than zero (see the technical reports in the GitHub repositories for more detail, Annex 2). A probability 99.9% or higher indicates high certainty of a downward trend, around 97% suggests a likely downward trend, while less than 95% indicates uncertainty about the trend.

Africa: Trend in PIKE in the last five years, 2018 - 2022

Continental or Subregional Categories	**Time Period (last 5 years)**	**Estimated Slope (annual estimate of PIKE change) (1/year)**	**95% Credible Interval**	**Probability of Negative Trend**	**Level of Certainty Associated with the Reported Trend (i.e., slope)**
Africa	2018-2022	-0.043	[-0.06, -0.027]	99.9%	highly certain downward
Central Africa	2018-2022	-0.063	[-0.103, -0.023]	99.9%	highly certain downward
Eastern Africa	2018-2022	-0.034	[-0.056, -0.014]	99.9%	highly certain downward
Southern Africa	2018-2022	-0.047	[-0.065, -0.029]	99.9%	highly certain downward
Western Africa	2018-2022	-0.008	[- 0.089, +0.08]	56.9%	uncertain of a trend

Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants Report – Annex 2

30. The table provides web page links to technical materials and R code used for PIKE trend analysis spanning various years. It lists the methodology conducted using both the original but now outdated LSMEANS approach, and the current Bayesian GLMM method (weighted/unweighted), starting from 2020 onwards. For more in-depth information, please access the corresponding repository web page link.

Posting Date	GitHub Repository name	Content	Repository web page link
Sept 2023	CITESmike2023/GLMM-2023-unweighted-model	PIKE TREND ANALYSIS (2003-2022) USING A BAYESIAN GENERALISED LINEAR MIXED MODEL APPROACH IN R (unweighted model)	https://github.com/CITESmike2023/GLMM-2023-unweighted-model
June 2022	CITESmike2020/ GLMM-2022-unweighted-model	PIKE TREND ANALYSIS USING A BAYESIAN GENERALISED LINEAR MIXED MODEL APPROACH IN R (unweighted model)	https://github.com/CITESmike2020/GLMM-2022-unweighted-model
Nov 2021	CITESmike2020/ GLMM-2021-unweighted-model	PIKE TREND ANALYSIS USING A BAYESIAN GENERALISED LINEAR MIXED MODEL APPROACH IN R (unweighted model)	https://github.com/CITESmike2020/GLMM-2021-unweighted-model
Nov 2020	CITESmike2020/ MIKE-GLMM	PIKE TREND ANALYSIS USING A BAYESIAN GENERALISED LINEAR MIXED MODEL APPROACH IN R (full models: LSMEANS + GLMM (weighted & unweighted)	https://github.com/CITESmike2020/MIKE-GLMM
Aug 2019	CITES-MIKE/ MIKE-LSMEANS	ORIGINAL LSMEANS CODE (DEPRECATED)	https://github.com/CITES-MIKE/MIKE-LSMEANS

ETIS report on Illegal Trade in Elephant Specimens

31. This section has been prepared by TRAFFIC*.

32. The Elephant Trade Information System, commonly known as ETIS, was established by 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), and is conducted in accordance with the provisions in Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP19) on Trade in elephant specimens.

33. ETIS is a comprehensive and global information system whose central feature is a database holding the details of seizures or confiscations of elephant ivory and other elephant specimens reported to occur since 1989. In 2020 ETIS Online (etisonline.org) was launched as an online database providing Parties with the ability to submit and review ETIS data online and to access and download data and reports relating to their country. ETIS is managed and coordinated by TRAFFIC in consultation with the MIKE-ETIS Technical Advisory Group (TAG) and in collaboration with the CITES Secretariat.

34. An external review of the ETIS programme was commissioned in 2020 by the CITES Secretariat on behalf of the Parties. Conclusions of the review were presented in CoP19 Doc. 21 and included proposed amendments to Res. Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP19), which were broadly adopted by the Parties at CoP19 and came into force on 23 February 2023 (Notification No. 2023/020). Additionally, Annex 3 of CoP19 Doc. 21 provided list of low, medium and high priority recommendations for implementation by the Secretariat, the Parties and TRAFFIC; the recommendations were adopted by the Parties in Decisions 19.94 – 19.95, that direct the Secretariat to work with TRAFFIC to implement, in consultation with the MIKE-ETIS TAG where required, the high and medium priority recommendations and to report back to the Standing Committee.

35. At CoP19, Parties also adopted Decisions relating to NIAP categorization and closure of domestic ivory markets. Decision 19.97 states that the CITES Secretariat shall, in consultation with the MIKE-ETIS Technical Advisory Group and TRAFFIC, develop draft criteria for the categorization of Parties based on the ETIS analysis and seizure data relating to elephant specimens submitted to TRAFFIC, and submit the draft criteria to the 78th meeting of the Standing Committee for consideration. Decisions 19.99 – 19.100 direct the CITES Secretariat to engage TRAFFIC and the MIKE-ETIS TAG to explore, and if feasible carry, an analysis of ETIS ivory seizures data connected to each Party with a legal domestic market for commercial trade in ivory, and to report on the progress to the 77th meeting of the Standing Committee.

36. This report provides updates on ETIS data collected to date, and on TRAFFIC's implementation of analyses relating to Decision 19.94 on the *Implementation of the priority recommendations from the review of the ETIS programme* (Annex 3 CoP19 Doc. 21) and Decision 19.99 on *Ivory seizures and domestic ivory markets*. As part of the implementation of review recommendations and following amendments to Res. Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP19), Notification No. 2023/082 requested Parties on 13 July 2023 to review and validate 2022 as well as earlier years' ETIS records. This validation process was still open at the time of this report's preparation, and this precluded TRAFFIC from conducting an updated annual trend analysis of illegal ivory trade for this SC77 report. Instead, presented are summaries of the 2022 ETIS data collected based on data downloaded from ETIS Online on 27 July 2023, as well as details of the implementation of the ETIS data validation process to date.

ETIS DATA

Data collection and validation

37. In terms of paragraph 4 in Annex 1 of Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP19) "All Parties, through their CITES Management Authorities, following liaisons with appropriate law enforcement agencies, should provide information on seizures and confiscations of ivory or other elephant specimens in the prescribed formats, either to the Secretariat or directly to TRAFFIC within 90 days of their occurrence or by 31 March each year for the submission of data covering seizures in the preceding year." Paragraph 2 of Annex 1 further clarifies that seizure data collected are "Irrespective of whether the seizure was made at an international border, or

* *The geographical designations employed in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the CITES Secretariat (or the United Nations Environment Programme) concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or area, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The responsibility for the contents of the document rests exclusively with its author*

at domestic level for example during the search of a private or business property or during inspections at domestic markets."

38. For 2022, 31 Parties reported seizure data and 20 Parties reported they made no seizures of elephant specimens[6]. Reporting by the Parties decreased in 2022 (n = 51 Parties[6]) compared to 2021 (n = 65) which could be attributed to the fact that Notification 2023/023 calling for ETIS data collection was published on 3 March 2023 after the amendments from CoP19 came into force. Given that the annual due date for ETIS data submission is 31 March, Parties may have had less time to prepare and submit ETIS data in this post-CoP year. TRAFFIC sought to increase reporting with outreach, which included the joint publication with the CITES Secretariat of the first annual ETIS newsletter in the three languages of the Convention on 20 March 2023. Parties' response to the outreach was positive, with added registrations to ETIS Online and reporting to ETIS following the publication of the newsletter.

39. On 13 April 2023 ETIS received 402 records spanning 2020 – 2021 from WCO as part of an annual data exchange. Of these 402 records, 150 consisted of new records of seizures that were not yet reported to ETIS by the Parties and were added to the database.

40. With the enhanced data collection efforts, a total of 261 new seizure records were added to the database for 2021, representing a 23% increase on the last total of 1,148 seizures previously reported for 2021 (CoP19 Inf. 33). A total of 1,066 new seizure records were added to the database for 2022; the majority of records (*n* = 912 or 86%) were submitted by Management Authorities (MAs), or their authorized data providers. Nearly half (48%; *n* = 422 out of 912) of the seizures reported by the Parties were submitted using the ETIS Online website[7].

41. The remaining 14% (*n* = 154) of 2022 seizure records were collected by TRAFFIC from the following non-MA sources (based on classification defined in paragraph 56 of this report and in CoP19 Inf. 40): Nat'l governments (n = 7), NGOs including TRAFFIC and EAGLE network (*n* = 60), other open source news articles (*n* = 87). It is noted that while the non-MA source designation represents the channels of communication in reporting the seizures to ETIS, the seizures have been reportedly made by the Parties' national authorities, e.g., customs, police, or wildlife agencies. It is further noted that if a seizure was reported both by MA and non-MA sources, it is considered as MA-reported in the ETIS database and analyses. During the ongoing validation process described below, more than half (*n* = 82) of the 154 non-MA reported records for 2022 have been validated by the MAs of the Parties that were reported to have made the seizure, and the remaining 72 seizures received no inquiries and will be included in ETIS analyses[8].

42. Following the data collection, the CITES Secretariat published Notification No. 2023/082 on 13 July 2023, requesting the Parties to validate their ETIS data by 3 August 2023. Notification No. 2023/082 provided guidance on how to submit inquiries on ETIS Online and invited Parties to contact ETIS to request data files if online access is not available. ETIS received one request for offline data that resulted in 121 inquiries; and one verbally communicated inquiry by contacting ETIS; all other record approvals and inquiries were submitted on ETIS Online.

43. At the time of the writing of this report the verification process had resulted in the following:

    - One Party reviewed records that were not pending validation, i.e., records that were already included in the ETIS database and dated back to 1989. The Party responded to ETIS via email with a list of 267 approved records and submitted inquiries on an additional 28 dating back to 1989[9]. These inquiries were received after the Party requested an extension and are therefore still pending.

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[6] *During the preparation of this report one additional Party submitted 2022 data bringing the total of Parties submitted 2022 data to 32 and the total Parties reporting to ETIS to 52. Given the late submission, these additional seizure records were not included in the tallies provided in this report.*

[7] *To facilitate data submission, TRAFFIC published a training video to aid the Parties in the submission process of seizure records. It is noted that, ETIS Online continued to see an increase in user registration, which currently total 119 registered, Management Authority-approved, users that represent 68 Parties or territories and one non-Party.*

[8] *As stated in Annex 1 of Res. Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP19): "TRAFFIC will include seizure data relating to their country in the analysis unless the Party indicates through ETIS Online or within the timeframe as specified in the Notification that the data should not be included."*

[9] *Of the 28 records, one seizure was made in 2017 within the data range of current ETIS analyses; the rest were of seizures made in 2004 or earlier which are not included in current ETIS analyses.*

- One Party that received an offline file of their ETIS data during the validation processing period and subsequently submitted inquiries on 121 seizures on 22 August 2023. Hence, these inquiries are also still pending during the finalization of this report.

- Three Parties approved 254 non-MA submitted seizure records from multiple years that were in review status for inclusion in ETIS analyses.

- An additional 490 seizures reported for the years 2016 – 2023 and collected from other sources (referred to as "non-MA sources") received no response and will be included in ETIS analyses[8]**Error! Bookmark not defined.**; those seizures consisted of 270 records extracted from CITES sources (SC75 Doc. 74 A7 and SC75 Doc. 74 A11), 114 records from the data exchange with WCO, 37 records collected from NGO sources, and 69 from other open sources including news articles. It is noted that for some of these non-MA sourced records, an official government agency was the source of the data (e.g., customs agency reporting to WCO, or Parties reporting to CITES as part of the NIAP report), however the channels of communication by which ETIS collect the data were defined as non-MA sources.

- Including the 28 inquiries referenced above, a total of 61 inquiries were submitted by 12 Parties on seizures that were reportedly made between 1989 to 2023. Inquiries related to ETIS data collected from non-MA sources (n = 39) included requests for general additional information including on sources (n = 29) or the suspect (n = 4); identification of duplicates (n = 4); providing information on forensic investigation, where the seized specimens were not elephant ivory (n = 1; WCO-reported record); or amending the seizure date (n = 1; WCO-reported record). Inquiries related to MA-reported data (n = 22) included deletion by the reporting Parties after forensic examination determined the specimens were not elephant ivory (n = 1); identifying self-reported duplicates (n = 1); or providing other additional information (n = 5). The remaining 15 inquiries on MA-reported data were made by implicated Parties asking for additional information on suspect nationalities or evidence for the reported trade chain that implicated the Party.

44. ETIS is waiting for response from the inquiring Party on 3 records where additional information was provided as requested. Of the submitted inquiries directed at other Parties, only cases where ETIS staff[10] was involved were resolved; otherwise, ETIS was not aware of any responses made by the reporting Party to the implicated Party that submitted the inquiry. It is noted that records with any inquiries that are pending a resolution are not incorporated into analyses.

Overview of seizure data

45. As of 27 July 2023, there were 35,236 records in ETIS from 1989-2022, of which 32,180 represented ivory seizures and confiscations (hereafter referred to as seizures or records for brevity; Figure 1). Of the ivory seizures, about half of the records (51%) reported to ETIS included both the number of pieces and weight of raw or worked ivory. As detailed in the methodology presented in Annex 1c of SC74 Doc. 68, in cases where only the number of ivory pieces but not its weight was reported, missing weights were estimated from the reported number of pieces, and for reported or estimated worked ivory, Raw Ivory Equivalent (RIE) weights were calculated to account for wastage. Hence collectively and hereafter in this report for brevity, weight seized refers to the total ivory weight from the reported data, the estimated weights for records with number of pieces but no weight, and the RIE weights for both reported or estimated worked ivory seizures weights.

46. Reported data for number of seizures and weight seized are summarized in Figure 1, but should not be interpreted as a trend, nor are they suggestive of absolute quantities of ivory seized over time, because of inherent bias in the seizure data stemming from variable seizure and reporting rates that are likely not similar for a given country between years, or for a given year between countries. That noted, there were fewer seizures reported for 2022 (*n* = 1,066) compared to those reported for 2021 (n = 1,409) and the overall reported weight seized also decreased from a total of 16.8 tonnes in 2021 to a total of 12.2 tonnes in 2022 (Figure 1).

[10] *ETIS staff refers to TRAFFIC personnel dedicated to working on ETIS.*

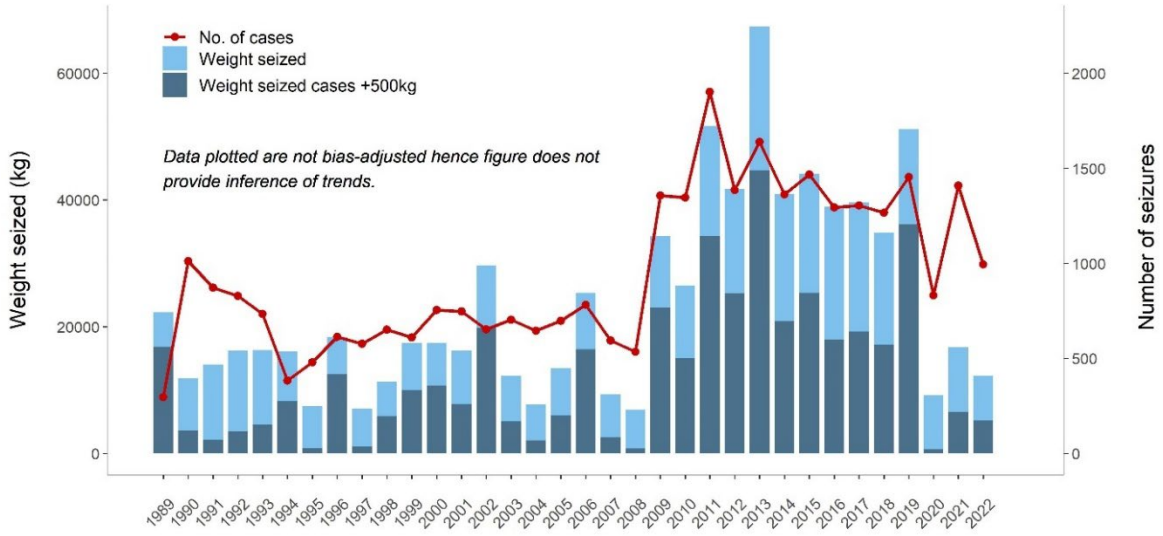

Figure 1: Number of ivory seizure cases reported and weight seized by year from 1989 – 2022. Summaries are based on data downloaded from the ETIS database on 27 July 2023. Number of seizures includes seizures and confiscation reported to ETIS. Weight seized refers to the total ivory weight from the reported data, the estimated weights for records with number of pieces but no weight[11], and the Raw Ivory Equivalent (RIE) weights for both reported or estimated worked ivory seizures weights (based on methods described in Annex 1c of SC74 Doc. 68).

47. The number of reported large seizures with seized weight greater than 100 kg also decreased (Figure 2). The largest seizure made in 2022 was reported by Malaysia, where authorities seized 4.2 tonnes of illegal ivory that was shipped as sea freight along with other wildlife contraband including rhino horns and pangolin scales; the shipment exported from Mozambique and transited through the Comoro Islands and the United Arab Emirates before reaching Malaysia where it was seized[12]. An additional notable seizure of almost 1 tonne of ivory was made by Mozambique in-county in 2022. Other large seizures reported for 2022 (*n* = 6) had seized weight of approximately 200 kg or less (Figure 2). While data suggest that the number of large seizures reported to ETIS, and their cumulative weight seized as depicted in Figure 1, are lower than the period before the COVID pandemic, seizures of large illegal consignments of several tonnes are reported in 2021 and 2022, which may indicate that organized criminal activity in illegal ivory trade is still evident post-COVID pandemic.

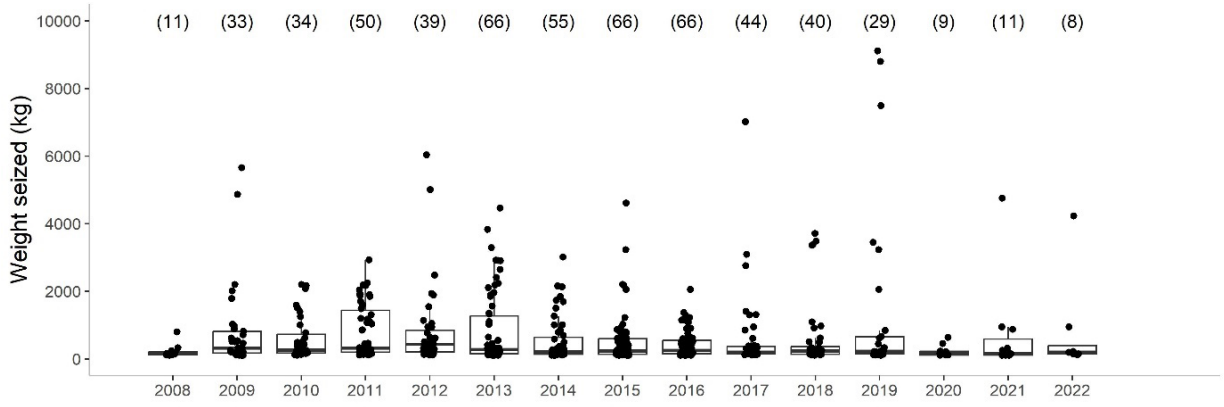

Figure 2. Distributions of ivory seizure weights for large seizures totalling 100 kg or more. Boxplots represent 50% of the data centered around the median (horizontal line), and dots represent individual ETIS data records that were used to construct each boxplot for each respective year. Numbers in parentheses are the number of seizures for confiscations reported to ETIS for the given year, where the seized weight was greater than or equal to 100 kg. Weight seized refers to the

[11] *The methodologies used to derive data summaries and modelling results are as published in CoP Doc. 66.6 and SC74 Doc. 68.*

[12] *Sources: https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2022/07/18/customs-seizes-six-tonnes-of-raw-ivory-biggest-bust-so-far-in-its-history; https://edition.cnn.com/2022/07/18/asia/malaysia-seized-trafficked-animal-parts-intl-hnk/index.html; total seized weight and trade route was updated by Malaysia's Management Authorities.*

total ivory weight from the reported data, the estimated weights for records with number of pieces but no weight, and the Raw Ivory Equivalent (RIE) weights for both reported or estimated worked ivory seizures weights (based on methods described in Annex 1c). Summaries are based on data downloaded from the ETIS database on 27 July 2023.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE REVIEW OF THE ETIS PROGRAMME

48. Twelve high and medium priority recommendations from the ETIS review were directed solely or jointly at TRAFFIC (Annex 3 of CoP19 Doc. 21). These include items related to data validation and confirmation process (# 5, # 8), examination of appropriateness of data elements (#19, #28), modelling development (# 24, # 25), integrated analysis with external sources of data, e.g., MIKE or stockpile data (# 27, # 31, # 32), ETIS Online procedures (# 22), administrative matters to publish an external Standard Operating Procedures (# 7) and fundraising for the sustainability of the ETIS programme (# 18).

49. Below are progress reports on items # 5, # 8, # 18, # 19, and # 24 which have been completed or partially completed (more details below). It is noted that in terms of review recommendation # 4, which was listed as ongoing, TRAFFIC always maintains objectivity and closely coordinates with the CITES Secretariat on ETIS external communications e.g., the ETIS newsletter that was published jointly with the CITES Secretariat.

ETIS data validation

50. As referenced above, the informal process of data validation practiced by TRAFFIC in previous years was carried out considering the amendments of Res. Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP19) and the publication of Notification No. 2023/082. In the new Notification, Parties were requested to review and validate records of seizures relating to their country consisting of: 1) seizures collected by ETIS staff from non-Management Authority (MA) sources that were reported to be made in country (*To Review Records* on ETIS Online), and 2) seizures that were reported by the MA of another country or collected by ETIS staff from non-MA sources, and that implicated the Party in connection to the trade chain or by involvement of a person who is a national of the Party (referred to as *Implicated Records* on ETIS Online).

51. As part of the ETIS data validation process, Parties were asked to submit any inquiries relating to records for any previous years within three weeks of notification. If no response is received, TRAFFIC will assume the data are validated and incorporate them into analyses. Details on the response to the Notification and submitted inquiries to date are provided in paragraphs 43 - 44 above and are not repeated in this section. Here, progress is reported on the work required to facilitate the validation process, including the development of new data workflow for confirmation and validation of ETIS data (review recommendation # 5 in Annex 3 of CoP19 Doc. 21), and its implementation into ETIS Online (recommendation # 8).

52. Recommendation # 5 called to define a clear process (system + workflow) for confirmation and validation of Parties that are implicated in the trade chain respectively. As previously published in CoP19 Inf 40, there are two streams of data entry to ETIS Online (Figure A1, Annex 1): a pathway for MA submitted seizures (Figure A2, Annex 1), and a pathway for non-MA submitted seizures (Figure A3, Annex 1). Detailed description of each pathway of the workflow are provided in Annex 1, including how the different record status relate to the records as they appear on ETIS Online. Along with the publication of Notification 2023/082, this completes the delivery of recommendation # 5.

53. In line with review recommendation # 8, TRAFFIC implemented the data system workflow described in Annex 1 into ETIS Online, including the described auto notification when inquiries are submitted. Implementation required a status change for all ETIS records to comply with the new data flows, and TRAFFIC conducted the required changes as well as tested to ensure the auto notification system is working properly. This was done in consultation with the CITES Secretariat. The remaining task to fully address review recommendations # 8 requires the implementation of an auto-notification for when an implicating record is uploaded on ETIS online, should a Party choose to opt-in for such notifications; this feature is scheduled for next phase of enhancements to ETIS Online.

54. In summary, it is evident from the implementation of recommendation # 5 and # 8, and the first validation process following the publication of Notification 2023/08 as described above, that the resulting validation and conformation system enhances ETIS Online, provides full transparency for the Parties, and promotes bilateral and inter-agency law enforcement collaboration and exchange of information to better understand illegal ivory trade activities.

Appropriateness of ETIS data

55. Review recommendation # 19 suggested determining the appropriateness of all data elements stored in ETIS, a recommendation that was partially addressed with the publication of CoP19 Inf. 40 and the exploration of the extent of MA and non-MA data in the ETIS database. Linked to recommendation # 19, review recommendation # 28 calls to explore the impact of removing lower source grades B and C data, which consist of non-MA data, from trend analyses. To address review recommendations # 19 and # 28, data summaries presented in CoP19 Inf. 40 are updated here and are expanded to each Party for full transparency. Furthermore, a modeling analysis is conducted whereby non-MA data are excluded to assess impacts on modeling results.

56. Appropriateness of ETIS data was determined using the definition of ETIS described in detail in CoP19 Inf. 40. In general, ETIS data consist of either MA, or non-MA, submitted data. MA submitted data are submitted to ETIS by the Party's MA, or their authorized data providers (e.g., registered users on ETIS Online from another agency, or data submission via EU-TWIX); data are submitted during ongoing ETIS data-collection efforts, by uploading them on ETIS Online, or by providing them via email or other correspondence. Non-MA submitted data are collected by ETIS staff[10] from non-MA sources as follows (names in bold correspond to the non-MA source as referred to hereafter for brevity):

    - **WCO** database of officially reported seizures by custom authorities (based on a data sharing agreement);
    - Online press releases, reports or other publications by the **CITES** Secretariat,
    - Intergovernmental organizations (**Inter-gov**. e.g., UNODC, INTERPOL),
    - National and local government agencies (**Nat'l gov**. e.g., customs, police);
    - non-governmental organization including TRAFFIC (**NGOs** e.g., WWF and EAGLE Network);
    - peer-reviewed publications (**Peer-review**); and
    - other general open sources such as news articles (**Other OS**).

    As noted in paragraph 41, these non-MA reporting categories represent the channels of communication in reporting the seizures to ETIS, but the seizures themselves were implemented by the Parties' national authorities.

57. Here, the analyses conducted for CoP19 Inf. 40 are updated with the latest ETIS data to provide: 1) the proportion of reported ETIS data from MA and non-MA sources from 2008 – 2022 (Table 1), and 2) summaries of the number of seizures from each non-MA source as defined in paragraph 56 (Table 2). Following consultation with the MIKE-ETIS TAG, data summaries- are also presented for each Party in Annex 2. For brevity, data are presented graphically for non-MA sources, but can be derived for MA sources; e.g., if extent of non-MA data is reported as 15 %, it can be assumed that MA-reported data consisted 85 % of the country's or territory's data from 2008 – 2022.

58. The majority of 2008 – 2022 ETIS data are, on average, largely sourced from CITES MAs (88%; based on updated data presented in Table 1). There is great variation across time (Table 2) and across Parties (Annex 2) in the extent of non-MA data from the various sources. For some Parties, including NIAP Parties, the only source of information on illegal ivory trade seized in country are collected into ETIS from non-MA sources. Based on the distributions provided in Annex 2, notable sources of non-MA data include WCO, Nat'l gov open sources, NGOs, and other open sources. As indicated in previous NIAP reports (e.g., SC75 Doc. 7.4 A6), NGOs may play a supportive role in-country to local law enforcement efforts, including in reporting, or they are able to translate report from native languages (e.g., Chinese, or French) for input into the ETIS database.

Table 1. ETIS data summaries by MA source from 2008 – 2022. Data were downloaded on 27 July 2023 and include 21,268 records with a status warranting inclusion in the analyses (including non-ivory seizures). Yearly tallies for MA sources (MA-reported) include records submitted by an MA authorized sources as well as those obtained from EU-TWIX with permission from the CITES MA. Yearly tallies for non-MA sources include records that were only reported by non-MA sources (as opposed to those reported by both MA and non-MA sources and presented as % overlap in Table 2).

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
MA-reported	666	1,493	1,390	1,977	1,372	1,520	1,270	1,361	1,221	1,146	1,110	1,335	749	1,264	965
Non-MA reported	71	80	106	88	135	246	175	198	181	238	235	244	138	230	82
Total Seizures	737	1,573	1,496	2,065	1,507	1,766	1,445	1,559	1,402	1,384	1,345	1,579	887	1,494	1,047
% MA-reported	90	95	93	96	91	86	88	87	87	83	83	85	84	85	92

Table 2. ETIS data summaries for non-MA reported data from 2008 – 2022. Data were downloaded on 27 July 2023 and include 21,268 records with a status warranting inclusion in the analyses (including non-ivory seizures). For each source: *Total* is the total count of seizures in ETIS that are attributed to the source; *% MA-overlap* is the percent overlap calculated as a subset of the seizures reported by that source that were also reported by MAs divided by total seizures that reported that source. It is noted that some seizures might have multiple sources and may be counted more than once therefore totals may exceed the Non-MA tallies from Table 1.

	WCO		CITES		Inter-gov.		Nat'l gov.		NGOs		Peer-review		Other OS	
	Total	% MA-overlap	Total	% MA-overlap	Total	% MA-overlap	Total	% MA-overlap	Total	% MA-overlap	Total	% MA-overlap	Total	% MA-overlap
2008	48	2	5	80	0	-	0	-	10	10	0	-	21	19
2009	44	9	0	-	0	-	1	20	9	22	2	50	34	15
2010	39	5	9	44	0	-	1	25	27	7	2	100	41	10
2011	49	31	3	0	1	100	0	0	26	8	1	100	38	32
2012	56	7	14	14	0	-	0	0	43	7	4	25	47	21
2013	141	9	13	46	4	25	1	50	66	35	7	100	113	28
2014	34	3	17	65	0	-	3	25	97	28	6	100	139	37
2015	92	20	5	40	0	-	0	0	70	23	2	50	98	29
2016	40	35	2	0	1	100	20	74	116	15	2	50	151	38
2017	32	19	7	29	2	0	16	76	158	30	2	100	235	37
2018	29	24	65	2	0	-	6	67	94	6	0	-	173	19
2019	14	50	52	0	0	-	2	29	132	2	0	-	241	20
2020	15	0	0	-	0	-	0	0	61	2	0	-	118	3
2021	20	0	0	-	1	0	3	14	84	2	0	-	150	9
2022	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	69	4	0	-	90	4

59. In line with review recommendation # 28, to further explore the impacts of inclusion of non-MA data on the trend analyses results provided to the Parties in ETIS report, trend analyses were conducted whereby all non-MA data were excluded. To ensure results are comparable to previous published trend analyses all modelling methodologies were kept similar to those producing the last published ETIS trend analyses for CoP19 (CoP19 Doc. 66.6). The data included were the same as those used to produce the most recent trend analyses published in CoP19 Inf. 33, with 18,244 ETIS data records spanning 2008 – 2021 for 69 Parties based on data downloaded on 5 October 2022.

60. Figure 3 depicts the transaction index (TI) resulting from the modelling of ETIS data including (grey line) and excluding (black line) data collected from non-MA sources. The loss of information, i.e., smaller TI values, is notable for all ivory type and weight classes, as well as the composite TI. However, loss is most notable for TIs of raw ivory of small and medium weight classes, which have large number of non-MA data (Annex 2). This changed the dynamics of the resulting illegal ivory trade trends with an increasing, rather than decreasing, trend for TI of small raw ivory, and a much less pronounced decreasing trend in recent years for TI of medium raw ivory. It is noted that at times small and medium raw ivory seizures are associated with African elephant range countries that also had considerably larger proportion of non-MA sourced data in the ETIS data informing analyses (as also depicted in Annex 2), hence this loss of information is in line with the extent of non-MA data reported.

61. In consultation with the MIKE-ETIS TAG on 10 August 2023, it was determined that further exploration of the smoothing effects of the trend models on the pronounced differences between the models that include and exclude non-MA data should be explored. In the interim it was recommended by the TAG to report the results of the implementation of recommendation # 28 on modelling exploration of the impact of removing non-MA data from trend analyses, while also presenting the input data for the models (Annex 2 of this report). Examination of the MA-reported data for each ivory type and weight classes presented in Annex 2, while factoring-in a smoothing effect, conforms to the respective plots depicted by the black trend lines in Figure 3 (i.e., models based only on MA-reported data).

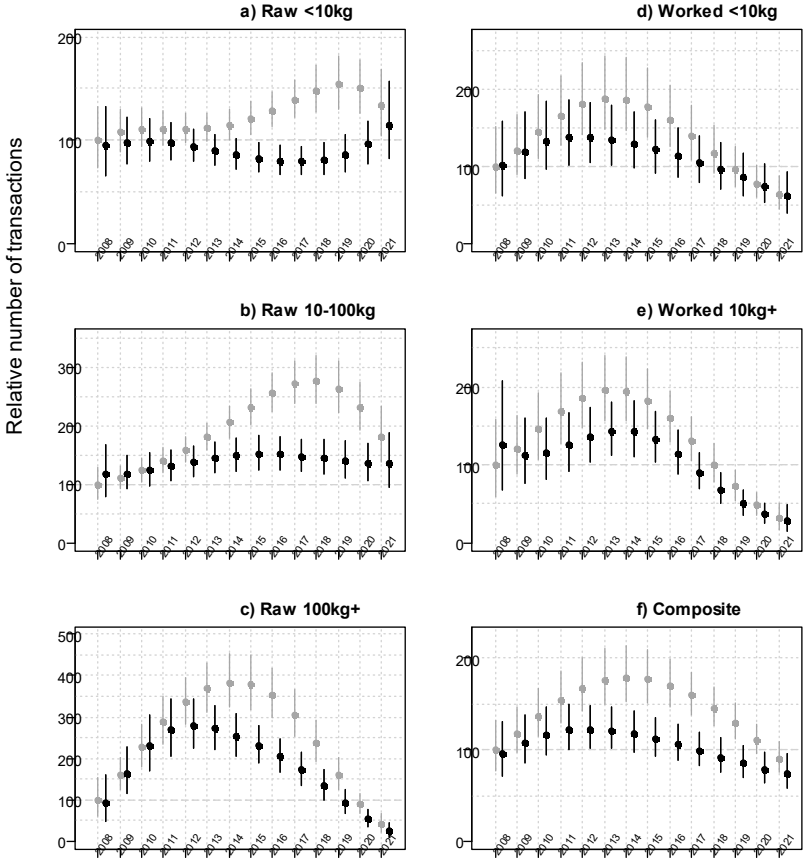

Figure 3. Transaction index for models with and without non-Management Authority data. Transaction index estimates for (a) small (<10 kg), (b) medium (10-100 kg), and (c) large (≥ 100 kg) raw ivory classes; (d) small (<10 kg), and (e) large (≥ 10 kg) worked ivory classes; and (f) the composite across all ivory types and weight classes. Mean estimates (bold dot) are shown with 95% credible intervals for models with all ETIS data published in CoP19 Inf. 33 and downloaded n 5 October 2022 (grey) and the results of the models without ETIS data sourced from non-MA sources (black). Models are based on ETIS data downloaded from the database on 5 October 2022 and methodologies are similar to those published in CoP19.

62. The detailed analyses on data sources by Party and the modelling results excluding non-MA data suggest that non-MA data are the only source of information for 18 Parties (Annex 2), including one Party engaged in the NIAP process. Removing such data from the trend analyses can result in the loss of, at times,

substantial information, changing the trend dynamics presented to CITES Parties. Lack of reporting by some Parties may be indicative of the need to increase in-country capacity to engage with ETIS and submit seizure data regularly in line with Res. Conf. 10.10. (Rev. CoP19). Parties with large proportion of non-MA data informing their ETIS analyses could increase their engagement with ETIS to regularly submit their seizure data and to validate existing and future non-MA data with the validation and confirmation process explained in previous section of this report. By doing so, Parties can ensure that the most representative data are used for the analyses informing CITES decision-making, and TRAFFIC is available to provide Parties with any training required to utilise ETIS effectively.

Modelling development

63. Review recommendation # 24 called for the testing of other covariates that could feature as independent country-specific variables for bias adjustment or as explanatory factors in understanding ETIS results. As a first step in this report, improvements are explored for the covariate informing the ETIS reporting bias adjustments as detailed in Annex 1c of SC74 Doc. 68 and in Underwood et al. 2013. Addressing the ETIS reporting covariate was especially pertinent given that the launch of ETIS Online changed the dynamics of data collection processes, thus outdating the data collection definitions used in construction of the covariate. Below are descriptions of the derivation of old and the newly proposed ETIS reporting covariates, as well as a modelling analysis comparing the old and new approaches. For the modelling comparisons, the same methodologies published in ETIS reports to CoP19 (CoP19 Doc. 66.6) were used with the most recent ETIS data as described in the *Appropriateness of ETIS data* section above.

64. Previous methodology of deriving the ETIS reporting covariate included defining the collection method for each seizure as follows:

    - *Targeted* - Acquisition of data through ETIS interventions involving active, direct primary data collection exercises in a country.

    - *Prompted* - Acquisition of data through ETIS intervention before a CITES event, e.g. COPs and Standing Committee meetings, as well as through other contacts with government authorities e.g. African and Asian Elephant Range State meetings and trainings, persistent follow-up letters, calls on incomplete information and provision of ETIS country reports.

    - *Passive* – Acquisition of data without any intervention or solicitation from a third party, e.g. NGOs working in conservation, newspaper articles, and internet alerts on key subject matter, etc.

    The ETIS reporting covariate was then constructed using the proportion of seizures with *Targeted*, *Prompted* and *Passive* data collection as follows (hereafter referred to as old covariate): (*Targeted* + *Prompted*)/ (*Targeted* + *Prompted* + *Passive*)[13]. Parties with higher proportion of *Targeted* and *Prompted* data elements, and therefore higher values of the ETIS reporting covariate, received less bias-adjustment in the model.

65. Following COVID-19 and with the launch of ETIS Online, the above data collection definitions became outdated. ETIS staff did not travel to collect data as part of in-country *Targeted* efforts, and several Parties began submitting their data passively on ETIS Online, thereby *Passive* no longer reflect only third Party (non-MA) data collection efforts. Additionally, seizure data reported as part of NIAP reporting requirements, often years after the seizures occurred, received a *Prompted* score even though the reporting occurred with a substantial time lag and was not directed at ETIS. Therefore, the older definitions of data collection as part of the ETIS reporting covariate were not adequately capturing the current data collection process.

65. In an effort to address these challenges and improve on the ETIS reporting covariate, TRAFFIC is proposing a new ETIS reporting covariate that better reflects the pathways of data collection (as defined in response to review recommendation # 5 described above). The new proposed reporting covariate is constructed using a ratio of the total number of seizures reported from *MA* and *non-MA* sources as follows: *MA*/(*MA* + *non-MA*). This is similar to the methodologies to produce the covariate of Law Enforcement (LE) ratio that is used to bias-adjust seizure rates in the trend analyses models (as per published methodologies in Annex 1c of SC74 Doc. 68 and Underwood et al. 2013). Therefore, the new ETIS reporting covariate (hereafter referred to as new covariate) behaves similarly to the LE ratio in that the higher the proportion of MA-reported data in ETIS, the less bias adjustment that is applied.

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[13] It is noted that, unless explicitly specified in relevant sections of this report – e.g., Figures 4 & 5, this old version of the ETIS covariate was used in ETIS trend analyses to date including those presented in this report as addressing review recommendation #28.

66. Figure 4 depicts the distribution of the old and new ETIS reporting covariate for countries or territories included in the modelling analyses comparing the two covariates. It is noted that there is great overlap for the two covariates, with a few notable differences. For example, Parties which submit their ETIS data continuously on ETIS Online (e.g. NA) receive higher ETIS reporting score with the new covariate. Parties that did not report to ETIS in recent years and for which ETIS received data from non-MA sources, such as WCO or CITES documents (e.g., CD), receive a lower ETIS reporting score with the new covariate approach.

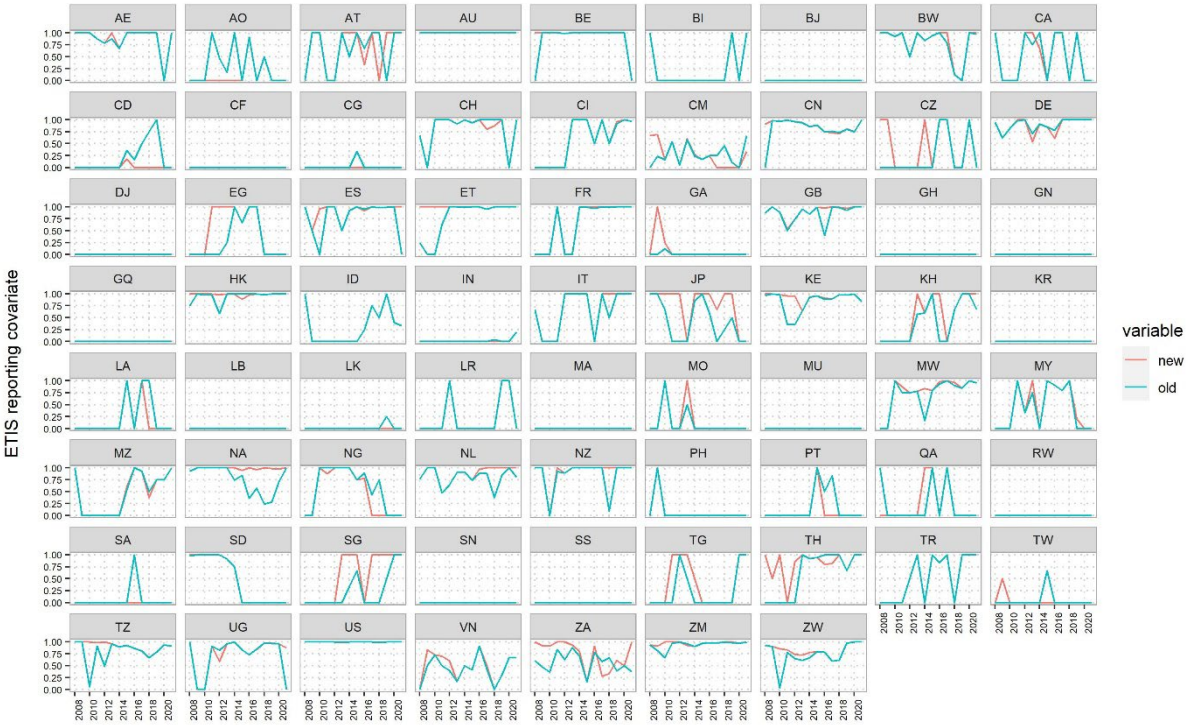


Figure 4. Comparison of bias-adjustment covariate for ETIS reporting based on new and old derivation methods. Old covariate is based on the proportion of seizures collected in a *Targeted* or *Prompted* methods and new covariate is based on the proportion of seizures that were reported to ETIS by Parties' MAs. Full derivation methods are described in detail in the main text. Covariates are derived based on data downloaded on 27 July 2023 and are presented for Parties included in the trend analyses reported for CoP19.

67. While additional variation exists between the new and old ETIS reporting covariates, models comparing the two covariates result in slightly higher Transaction Index estimates with the new reporting covariate, but importantly the overall trend dynamics are mirrored (Figure 5). Adjustment of Transaction Indices with the new covariate is more pronounced for raw small and medium ivory classes, which is in line with the results reported above where most non-MA data informs the models of these classes. Upon consultation, MIKE-ETIS TAG suggested additional future analyses to explore the relationships of the covariates and resulting models. In the interim, and given that the new covariate better represents current data collection processes and given trend dynamics did not change, TRAFFIC is proposing to use the new ETIS reporting covariate in future ETIS trend analyses.

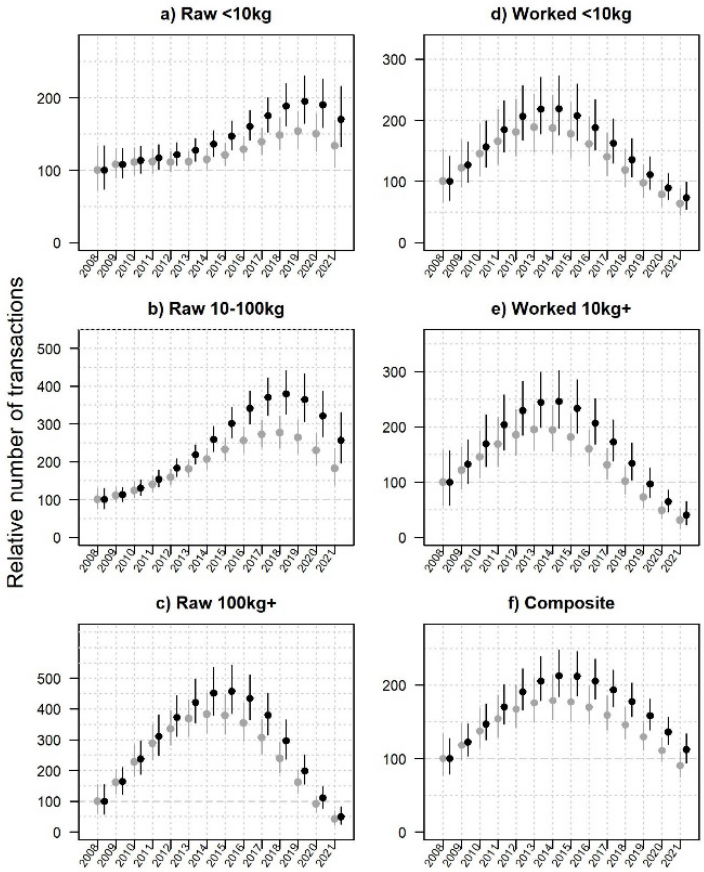


Figure 5. Transaction index for models with new and old bias-adjustment ETIS reporting covariate. Transaction index estimates for (a) small (<10 kg), (b) medium (10-100 kg), and (c) large (≥ 100 kg) raw ivory classes; (d) small (<10 kg), and (e) large (≥ 10 kg) worked ivory classes; and (f) the composite across all ivory types and weight classes. Mean estimates (bold dot) are shown with 95% credible intervals for models using the old (grey) and new (black) ETIS reporting covariate. Models are based on ETIS data downloaded from the database on 27 July 2023 and methodologies are similar to those published in CoP19.

Mobilising resources for ETIS sustainability

68. Review recommendation # 18 was directed to the CITES Secretariat with support from TRAFFIC to ensure that financial resources are available for the implementation of review recommendations and for the operation of ETIS. This is in line with amendments made to paragraph 7 Annex 1 of Res. Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP19) stating that "Regular funding should be secured to ensure that ETIS can meet minimum operational requirements to deliver on the objectives in paragraph 27 a) of the Resolution" and in line with review recommendation # 17 directed at the CITES Secretariat and the Parties to ensure that ETIS' minimum operating budget to "keep the lights on" is secured. Finally, it is noted that the ETIS review concluded that the lack of financial sustainability is an impediment for the ETIS programme to achieve its objectives, enhance its functionality and ensure its robustness (SC74 Doc. 12).

69. The current financial standing of the ETIS programme for 2024 – 2026 is summarised in Table 3. ETIS is currently funded by grants received directly to TRAFFIC from the governments of Germany and the USA that will expire in December 2025 and Sept 2023 respectively. ETIS is also supported by funds received from the EU, UK and China as part of the MIKE+ grant agreement with the CITES Secretariat that will expire in June of 2024. With the available funds ETIS budget is mostly secured for calendar year 2024 but has large shortfalls in 2025 and has no funds secured for 2026 to cover its minimum operations.

Table 3. ETIS projected budget shortfall for calendar years 2024-2026

USD	2024	2025	2026
Budget	421,937	437,578	449,483
Secured Funding	370,593	88,810	0
Shortfall	**51,344**	**348,769**	**449,483**

70. TRAFFIC secures up to 75 % of the annual operating budget of ETIS as direct grants from donors in addition to the support provided through the CITES Secretariat. This requires ETIS staff[14] to spend substantial amounts of time applying for grants and reporting to donors. With support from the Parties and the CITES Secretariat, TRAFFIC successfully secured almost 90 % of the required funds for calendar year 2024 to maintain operations and to increase capacity for the required work to implement the review recommendations and CoP19 Decisions. However, funds secured are not sufficient to maintain the minimum required operations of the programme in the following years. Having a more regular secured source of funding, as recommended in the amendments to Res. Con. 10.10. (Rev. CoP19), will greatly alleviate the burden on ETIS staff and allow TRAFFIC to deliver the analyses anticipated by the Parties.

REPORT IN RESPONSE TO DECISION 19.99 ON FEASIBILITY OF USE OF ETIS DATA IN AN ANALYSIS OF LEGAL DOMESTIC IVORY MARKETS

71. CITES Decision 19.99 direct the Secretariat to "*engage with the MIKE and ETIS Technical Advisory Group and TRAFFIC to advise whether an analysis of ivory seizures connected to each Party with a legal domestic market for commercial trade in ivory could be undertaken and, if feasible, carry out the analysis and include the results in the ETIS report to the Standing Committee at its 78th meeting, and to the 20th meeting of the Conference of the Parties*." After consultation with the MIKE-ETIS TAG on 25 April 2023, TRAFFIC was asked to explore the feasibility of such an analysis by proposing 1) criteria to identify which legal domestic ivory markets to include in analyses and 2) a concept analysis of how ETIS data can be used to inform the Parties on Decision 19.99 including stating assumptions and limitations of the data.

72. To address the first task of proposing criteria to identify Parties to include in an analysis of legal domestic ivory markets (DIMs), TRAFFIC conducted a survey of CITES CoP and SC documents from the past decade to assess which Parties are reported to have legal DIMs. Survey results are based on the review of 21 CITES documents published between 2016 and 2022, including Parties' responses to CITES Notifications to report on legal ivory domestic markets (No. 2017/077, 2020/026, and 2021/005) and an independent study commissioned by the CITES Secretariat on behalf of the Parties in response to Decision 17.87 (SC70 Inf. 19 (Rev. 1)). Data on existing bans, exemptions and national registration systems of the ivory specimens to be legally traded were augmented by reviewing the relevant national legislation documents.

73. Overall, a total of 50 Parties[15] were named in the surveyed documents. It was evident from the survey, that 12 Parties[16] had reported a legal domestic ivory market. Thirty-three Parties[17] responded to the Secretariat's surveys and reported not to have a legal domestic ivory market, while another five Parties[18] did not respond to the Secretariat's survey but through a study commissioned by the Secretariate were found not to have legal domestic markets; these parties may have had a ban or prohibition on trade in ivory in place. Of these

[14] *Despite the increase in reporting requirements, ETIS staffing had remained at two people since the 1990s until recently, due to the need to implement the array of recommendations arising from CoP19 in addition to the regular ETIS operation.*

[15] *Angola, Australia, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, China, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, European Union, Gabon, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Hong Kong SAR, Israel, Ivory Coast, Japan, Kenya, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Liberia, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Philippines, Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Thailand, Togo, Uganda, United Kingdom, United States of America, Viet Nam and Zimbabwe.*

[16] *Australia, Cameroon, Comoros, Equatorial Guinea, Greece, New Zealand, Senegal, Singapore, Somalia, South Africa, Togo and Zimbabwe.*

[17] *Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, European Union, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Hong Kong SAR, Israel, Ivory Coast, Japan, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Thailand, Uganda, United Kingdom and United States of America.*

[18] *China, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Philippines and Viet Nam.*

38 Parties or territories with no legal domestic markets, 17[19] included exemptions on the bans or prohibitions that varied greatly allowing some forms of trade, for example, in pre-Convention ivory or antique specimens[20], or commercially under a registration system. Some exemptions were more restrictive on the details of the specimens to be traded, providing permissions to "auction ivory cultural relics under strict supervision"[21], whereas other exemptions provided less strict permission to legally sell "whole tusks, cut pieces and ivory products that pre-existed before the CITES trade ban"[10]. Furthermore, for a given Party, exemptions for trade varied depending on whether possession was determined to be commercial or personal[22]. As such it became difficult to discern criteria of what consists of a legal domestic ivory market.

74. Given the issues noted above on the difficulties to define what constituted a legal domestic ivory market and upon further consultation with the MIKE-ETIS TAG on 10 August 2023, several questions were raised in regards to the objectives of an analysis of ETIS data related to Parties with legal domestic ivory markets as stated in Decisions 19.99. The TAG suggested pursuing further clarification from the Parties before pursuing an analysis. TRAFFIC therefore welcomes further guidance from the Parties on the definitions of legal domestic ivory market, and the proposed analyses for implementation of Decision 19.99.

Acknowledgements

75. The ETIS programme is entirely dependent on donor and grant support. TRAFFIC is grateful for generous contributions over time by: The Darwin Initiative, a U.K. government grants scheme; The European Union; The German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Society; The Belgian Federal Public Service for Food, Health, and the Environment; The Ministry of Agriculture, Nature, and Food Quality of the Netherlands; The Netherlands Federal Public Service, Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment; University of Reading; The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; The U.S. Agency for International Development; WWF.

[19] *Burundi, China, Eritrea, European Union, Ghana, Hong Kong SAR, Israel, Japan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Mozambique, Philippines, Sierra Leone, Thailand, United Kingdom, United States of America and Viet Nam.*

[20] *SC70 Inf. 19 (Rev. 1)*

[21] *State Council Notice on Ban on Sale of Ivory (01/12/2017); SC70 Inf. 19 (Rev. 1)*

[22] *SC70 Inf. 19 (Rev. 1); SC70 Inf. 21*

ETIS Report Annex 1. System and workflow of MA and non-MA submitted data, and pathways to submit inquiries on all series in implementation of ETIS review recommendation # 5 (Annex 3 of CoP19 Doc. 21).

76. The pathway for MA submitted seizures (Figure A1) starts with a newly created seizure record on ETIS Online, which will remain *In Draft* status of 1 (*Draft Records* on ETIS Online) until formally submitted to the ETIS[23]. This intermediate draft stage allows the Parties to collect data from multiple registered users that might be deployed in the field (e.g., custom or law enforcement officers), whereby centralized registered user(s) can then provide a final review to submit the records to ETIS (e.g., the CITES MA). If needed, draft records can be deleted by the MA, in which case they receive a status of -1 and are no longer visible to the user. Once submitted, draft records receive a status of 2 or *In Processing* (Figure A1; *Submitted Records* on ETIS Online). At this stage ETIS staff will determine if the record is a duplicate of records already collected from other sources. If it is determined as a duplicate, only one record will be maintained but information will be combined such that MA-reported data will override any previous data. If substantial discrepancies are noted, the ETIS administrator will contact the MA for clarifications. If no issues are noted after the review, then the record receives a status 4, or included *In Analyses* (Figure A1; *Validated Records* on ETIS Online).

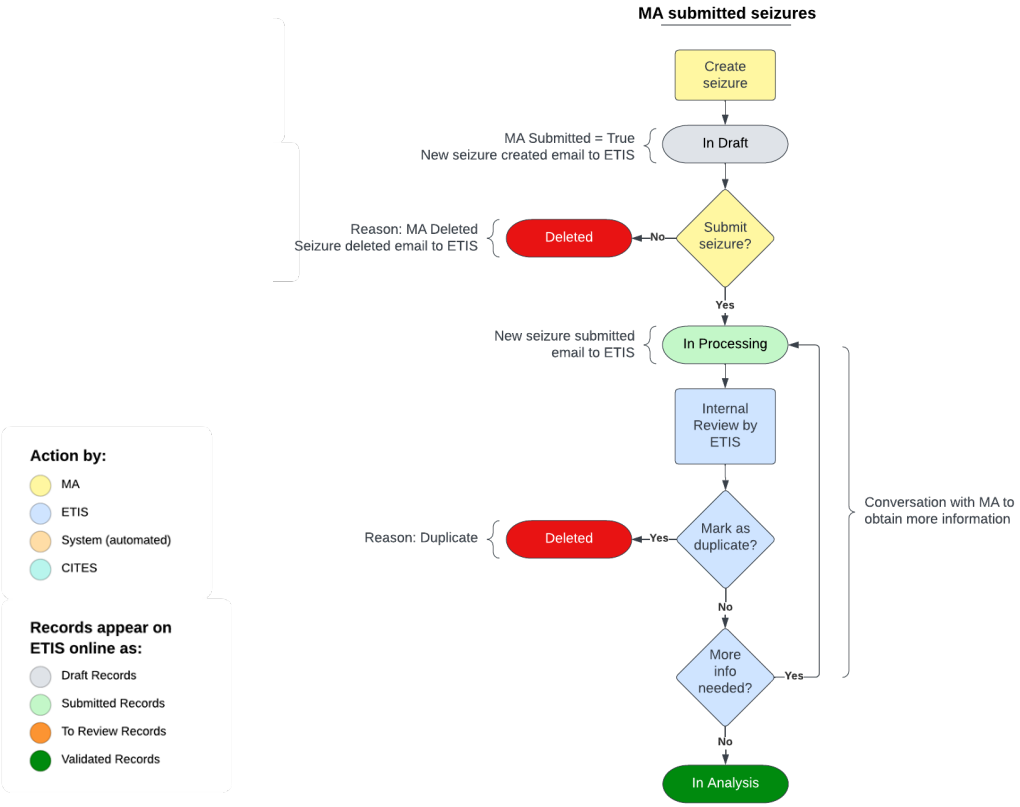


Figure A1. Workflow pathway for MA submitted ETIS records.

77. The pathway for non-MA submitted seizures (Figure A2) starts when ETIS staff create a seizure record that will remain *In Draft* status 1 until sufficient information is gathered to warrant its inclusion in ETIS Online. At this point the record is not visible to the registered users for the Party. However, once the required information is collected and verified against official sources, the draft records from non-MA sources are moved to *In Verification* status of 3 (*To Review Records* on ETIS Online). Then, the records await validation by the MA of the country that made the seizure following the validation Notification issued by the CITES Secretariat, although it is noted that Parties can view and validate their records on ETIS Online at any time. If the registered users associated with the Party that made

[23] *It is noted that these draft records also receive a designation of MA submitted = TRUE and are therefore visible to the MA (unlike draft records created by ETIS staff).*

the seizure approve the record *In Verification*, or if following the Notification, no response was received such that the record is assumed to be validated, the record will receive *In Analysis* status of 4 and will be viewable in *Validated Records* on ETIS Online. It is noted that Parties' MA can suggest amendments on *In Verification* or *Validated* records at any given time (Figure A2 and Figure A3).

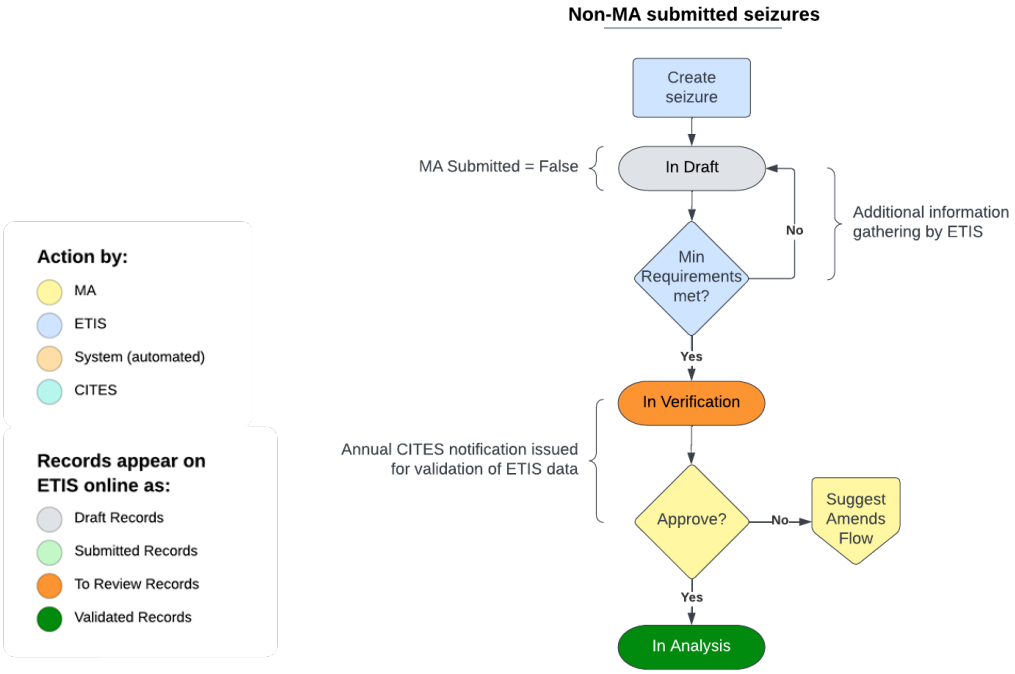


Figure A2. Workflow pathway for non-MA submitted ETIS records.

78. Figure A3 describes the various pathways for Parties to submit inquiries on MA and non-MA submitted records, whether the seizures were reportedly made in country or implicated the Party along the trade chain. For seizures made in country, the MA can suggest amendments to records *In Verification* or *In Analysis* as described above. Once a request for amendments is submitted, ETIS staff will receive a notification email and will process the request. An outcome may result in the records being: *deleted* (status of -1) if it is deemed as a duplicate or rejected by the MA for justifiable reasons; *approved* into analysis (status of 4) with modifications based suggested amendments; or, if there is major discrepancy and additional mediation is needed, TRAFFIC will reach out to the CITES Secretariat for consultation to determine the best outcome for the record.

79. For implicating records, and as depicted in Figure A3, submitting an inquiry result in the record immediately receiving a status of 0 (*In Review*), which excludes it from analyses even if previously validated and the record will appear as *Under Review* on ETIS Online. If the record was originally submitted by another MA, an online notification-enabling system will generate an email to the MA owner of the data, cc'ing ETIS staff, CITES Secretariat and the MA that submitted the inquiry. If the record was originally collected from non-MA sources by ETIS staff, the ETIS administrator will receive the email, cc'ing the CITES Secretariat and the MA that submitted the inquiry. The email will provide the details of the inquiry and ask for a response within the allotted time. Once a response is received, the record will either be resorted into analysis or deleted with its respective status changed (Figure A3).

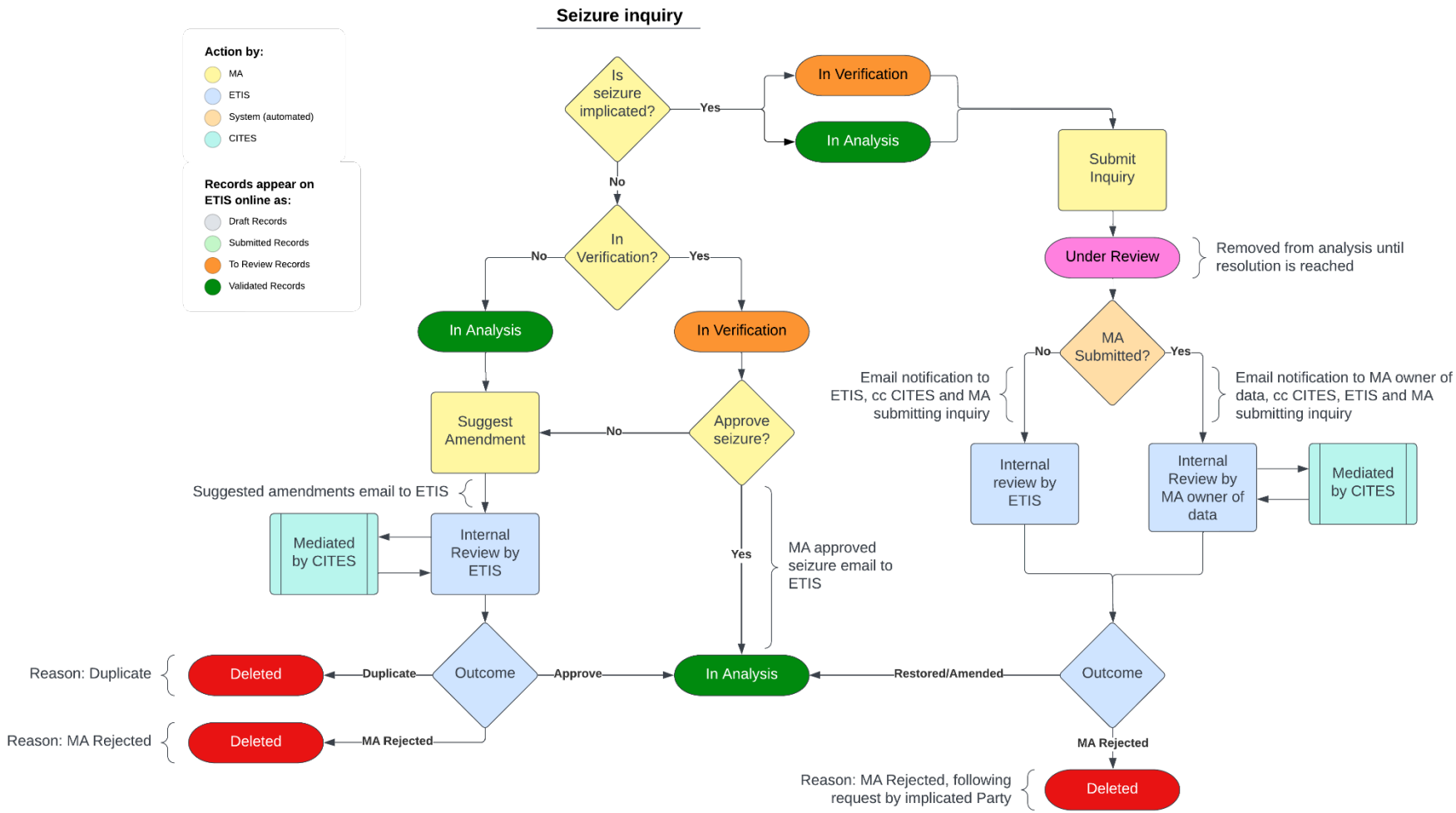
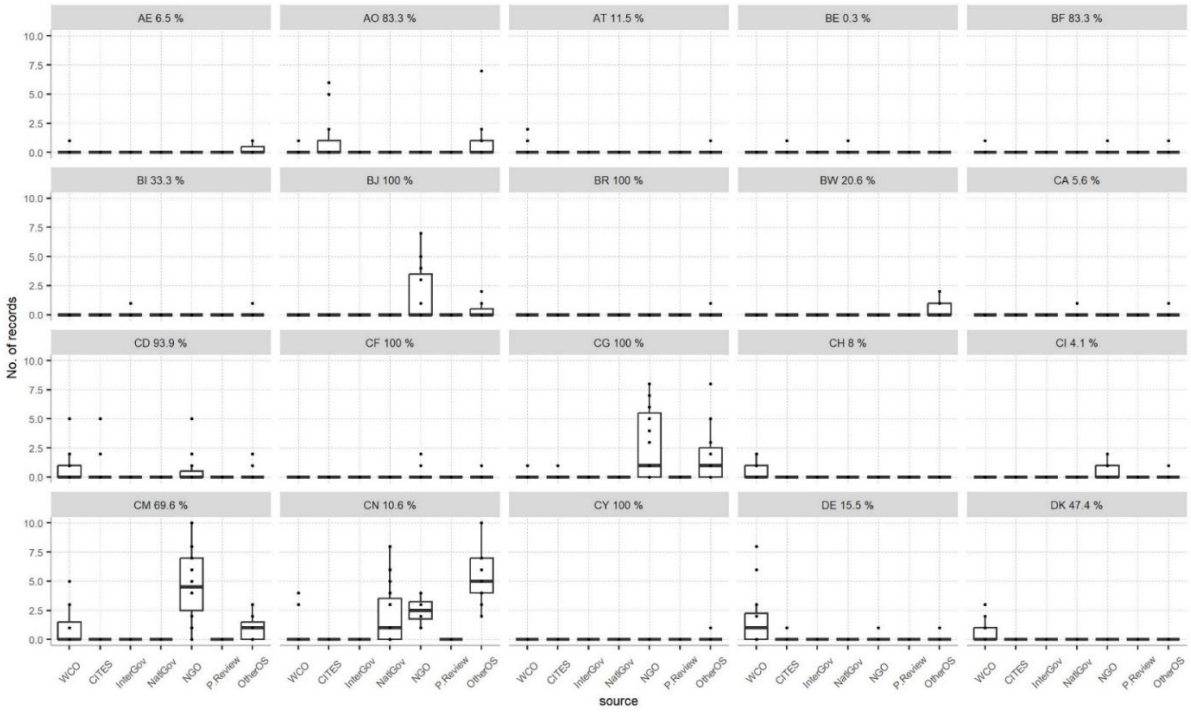
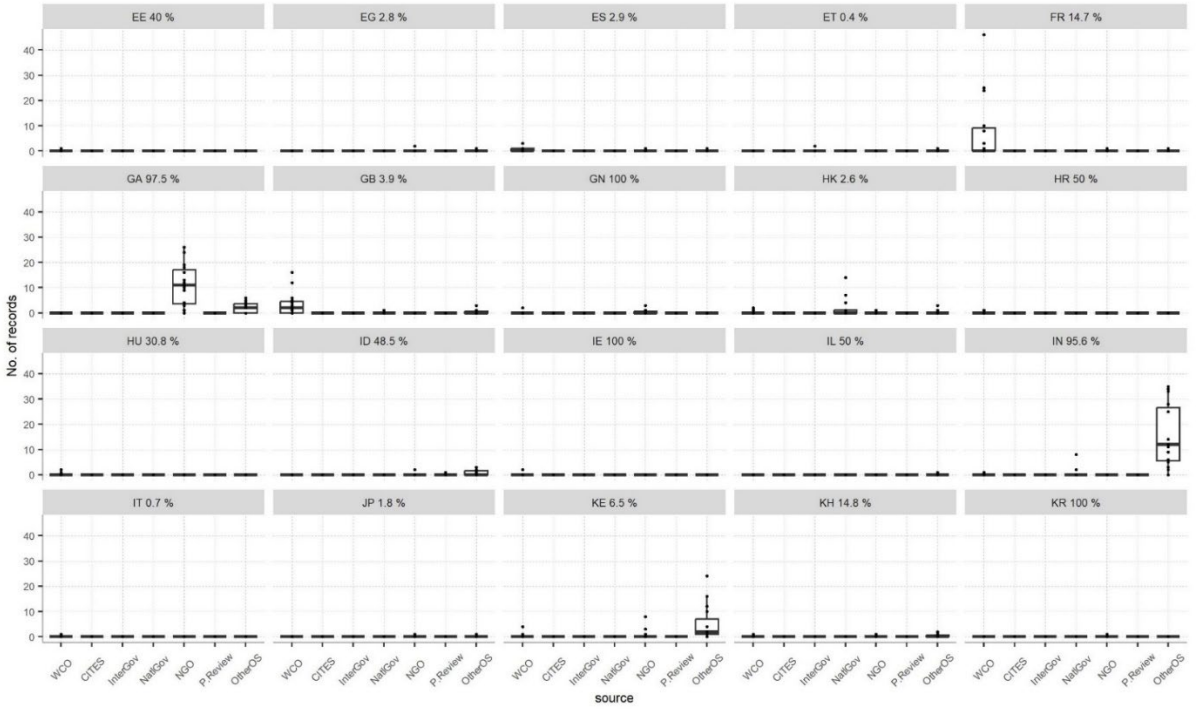


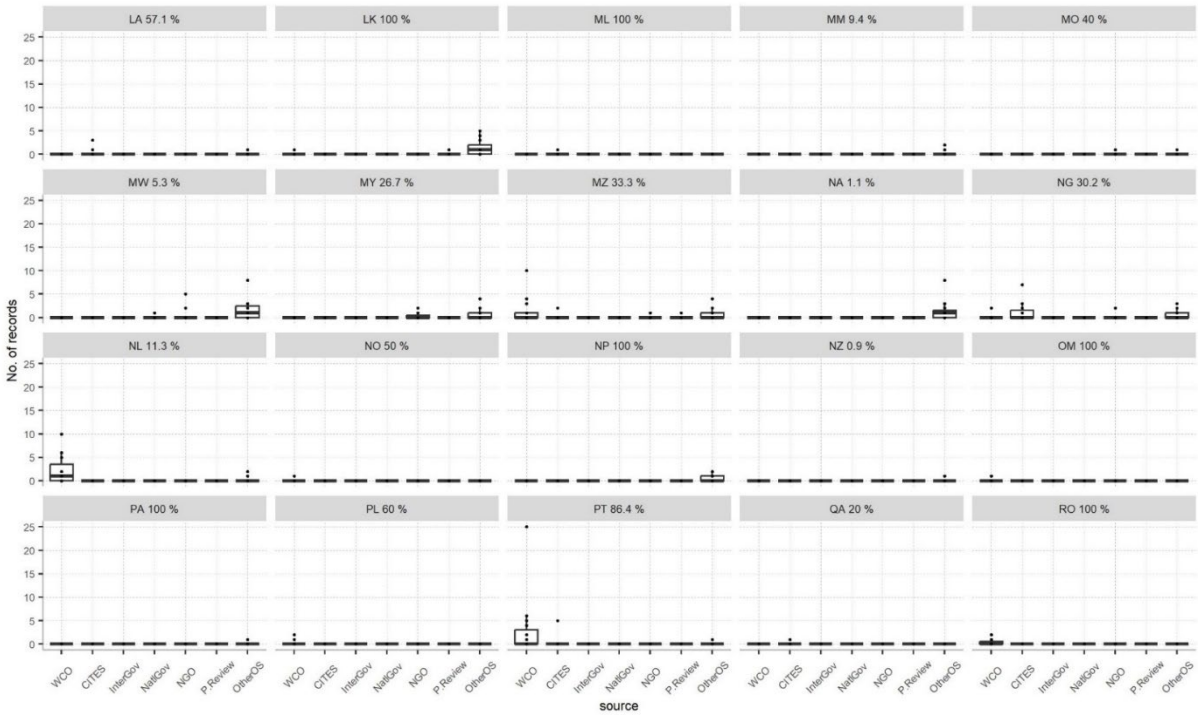
Figure A3. Workflow pathway for submitting an inquiry on ETIS records.

ETIS Report Annex 2 Distribution of yearly total number of seizures from 2008 – 2022 for each country or territory (*n* = 79) with at least one record in the database that was collected from non-Management Authority (MA) sources.

80. The different non-MA types are described in detail in paragraph 56. Each panel has a box plot graph for each non-MA source type. Each particular plot, for example for WCO data, represents the distribution of the total number of seizure records collected from that non-MA type for that country or territory across the yearly range 2008 – 2022. Hence each box plot represents a distribution based on 15 yearly tallies for each particular non-MA source. The dots represent the actual yearly tallies of the number of seizures. Given there is large prevalence of zeros in the data, not all of the 15 tallies are presented for each non-MA source. As a result, when many zeros appear in the yearly tallies, the thick horizontal line of the boxplot that represents the median is centred on zero even if there are some data points above zero. Lastly, the percentages near country name represent the total percent of non-MA data in the database out of total data for the Party.




EE 40 %
EG 2.8 %
ES 2.9 %
ET 0.4 %
FR 14.7 %
GA 97.5 %
GB 3.9 %
GN 100 %
HK 2.6 %
HR 50 %
HU 30.8 %
ID 48.5 %
IE 100 %
IL 50 %
IN 95.6 %
IT 0.7 %
JP 1.8 %
KE 6.5 %
KH 14.8 %
KR 100 %
No. of records
WCO
CITES
InterGov
NatlGov
NGO
P.Review
OtherOS
source


LA 57.1 %
LK 100 %
ML 100 %
MM 9.4 %
MO 40 %
MW 5.3 %
MY 26.7 %
MZ 33.3 %
NA 1.1 %
NG 30.2 %
NL 11.3 %
NO 50 %
NP 100 %
NZ 0.9 %
OM 100 %
PA 100 %
PL 60 %
PT 86.4 %
QA 20 %
RO 100 %
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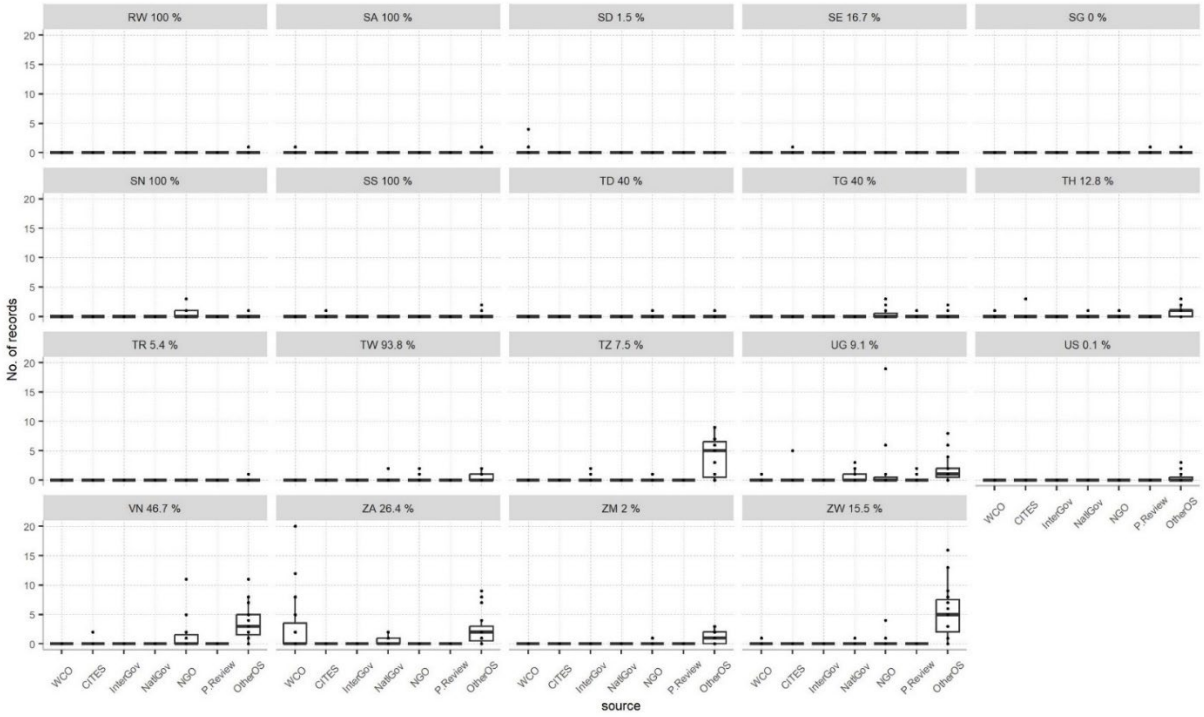
RW 100 %
SA 100 %
SD 1.5 %
SE 16.7 %
SG 0 %
SN 100 %
SS 100 %
TD 40 %
TG 40 %
TH 12.8 %
TR 5.4 %
TW 93.8 %
TZ 7.5 %
UG 9.1 %
US 0.1 %
VN 46.7 %
ZA 26.4 %
ZM 2 %
ZW 15.5 %
No. of records
source
WCO
CITES
InterGov
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NGO
P.Review
OtherOS

ETIS Report Annex 3. ETIS data summaries by MA source and by ivory type and weight classes from 2008 – 2022. Data were downloaded on 27 July 2023 and include 21,268 records with a status warranting inclusion in the analyses (including non-ivory seizures). Yearly tallies for MA sources (MA-reported) include records submitted by an MA authorized sources and those obtained from EU-TWIX with permission from the CITES MA. Yearly tallies for non-MA sources include records that were only reported by non-MA sources (as opposed to reported by both MA and non-MA sources) detailed in paragraph 43 of main report.

RAW SMALL

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
MA-reported	117	187	186	253	173	263	153	180	206	176	174	206	174	248	163
Non-MA reported	13	19	21	16	13	22	38	38	39	73	75	76	39	54	0
Total Seizures	130	206	207	269	186	285	191	218	245	249	249	282	213	302	163
% MA-reported	90	91	90	94	93	92	80	83	84	71	70	73	82	82	100

RAW MEDIUM

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
MA-reported	70	127	82	118	160	177	162	154	185	232	206	232	150	191	180
Non-MA reported	9	14	11	20	23	39	42	37	52	83	75	65	41	42	0
Total Seizures	79	141	93	138	183	216	204	191	237	315	281	297	191	233	180
% MA-reported	89	90	88	86	87	82	79	81	78	74	73	78	79	82	100

RAW LARGE

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
MA-reported	7	20	26	31	26	51	34	38	43	23	17	18	5	4	6
Non-MA reported	2	4	3	15	9	6	12	23	17	15	19	9	2	5	0
Total Seizures	9	24	29	46	35	57	46	61	60	38	36	27	7	9	6
% MA-reported	78	83	90	67	74	89	74	62	72	61	47	67	71	44	100

WOREKD SMALL

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
MA-reported	278	947	956	1,337	882	932	772	854	636	607	634	750	359	738	547
Non-MA reported	41	33	54	26	67	159	57	80	61	47	52	84	56	122	80
Total Seizures	319	980	1,010	1,363	949	1,091	829	934	697	654	686	834	415	860	627
% MA-reported	87	97	95	98	93	85	93	91	91	93	92	90	87	86	87

WORKED LARGE

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
MA-reported	19	39	30	103	41	84	102	61	65	49	19	22	18	13	11
Non-MA reported	4	7	12	4	14	19	15	18	10	15	7	8	1	4	1
Total Seizures	23	46	42	107	55	103	117	79	75	64	26	30	19	17	12
% MA-reported	83	85	71	96	75	82	87	77	87	77	73	73	95	76	92

Trade in elephant specimens

81. This section has been prepared by UNEP-WCMC.

82. An overview of reported trade in *Loxodonta africana* using CITES annual report data over the period 2018-2021 is provided herein. Complete trade data for 2022 are not yet available, as the deadline for submission of annual reports to CITES for 2022 is 31 October 2023. Over the four-year period, there was reported direct wild-sourced[24] trade in *L. africana* from nine range States (as reported by both exporters and importers). Of these, CITES annual reports had been received from all range States for all years 2018-2021, with the exception of one report from the United Republic of Tanzania (2021) that had not yet been received. All trade statistics are based on data held within the CITES Trade Database[25].

83. Reported legal direct trade in *L. africana* by range States over the period 2018-2021 principally comprised 825 wild-sourced sport-hunted[26] trophies and 9,982 wild-sourced skin pieces (of which 98% were reported for commercial purposes). Direct trade in wild-sourced ivory carvings[27] reported by range States in 2018-2021 totalled 27 kg traded for personal purposes and 704 items (of which 98% were reported personal purposes). The majority (78%) of ivory carvings traded by weight were reported in 2018 (21 kg), and approximately half of the ivory carvings reported by number were reported in 2021.

84. In total, for 2018-2021, range States reported the direct export of 237 tusks and 13,955 kg of wild-sourced tusks (Table 1 and Table 2); countries of import recorded the import of 208 tusks and 697 kg of tusks. Trade in tusks reported by number increased five-fold between 2018 and 2021 (from 22 to 117) according to data reported by range States, while the number of tusks reported by importers decreased by 30% (Table 1). All trade in tusks by weight was exported from Zimbabwe and almost entirely reported as hunting trophies (purpose code 'H'). Zimbabwe reported the export of 5,159 kg of tusks in 2021, which represented a nearly three-fold increase compared to 2020 levels (1,875 kg) and represented the highest level of trade over this period (Table 2).

85. In addition, a total of 825 wild-sourced sport-hunted trophies were reported by exporters and 857 reported by importers 2018-2021 (Table 3).

86. Discrepancies in the number of tusks and/or trophies reported in trade by range States compared with the number reported by importing countries can in part be explained by differences in reporting. For example, Zimbabwe reported exports of tusks primarily by weight, whereas countries of import largely reported trade in tusks from Zimbabwe by number. Discrepancies may also occur where annual reports have not yet been received from importing countries and/or in cases where importers and exporters reported trade in different years due to year-end trade[28].

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[24] For the purposes of this analysis, 'wild-sourced' trade includes CITES source codes 'W' and 'U', as well as trade without a source specified (represented as a blank source in the CITES Trade Database).

[25] CITES Trade Database 2023. Compiled by UNEP-WCMC for the CITES Secretariat. Available at: trade.cites.org. Acccessed 23/08/2023.

[26] 'Sport-hunted trophies' consist of trade in 'trophies' reported as purposes 'H', 'P' and 'T' as well as those without a purpose specified. Ninety-eight percent of the 825 trophies were reported with purpose 'H'.

[27] Including trade reported in the CITES Trade Database as ivory carvings, jewellery, ivory jewellery, and piano keys.

[28] Where the exporter reports the permit issued at the end of one year, and the importer reports the transaction having occurred in the next year. This could lead, for instance, to some trade reported in 2020 by exporters that is reported by importing countries in 2021, resulting in discrepancies in both years.

Table 1. Direct trade in wild-sourced tusks of* Loxodonta africana *from range States, 2018-2021 (all purposes).*

		Number of tusks				
Exporter	**Reported by**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**Total**
Botswana	Exporter	0	10	0	36	46
	Importer	0	0	0	5	5
Cameroon	Exporter	0	4	0	0	4
	Importer	0	0	0	0	0
Kenya	Exporter	0	0	0	2	2
	Importer	0	0	0	2	2
Mozambique	Exporter	2	6	2	2	12
	Importer	0	2	0	2	4
Namibia	Exporter	15	16	20	52	103
	Importer	21	14	4	4	43
South Africa	Exporter	1	12	18	12	43
	Importer	9	0	6	16	31
United Republic of Tanzania	Exporter	4	1	2	NR	7
	Importer	2	2	2	0	6
Zambia	Exporter	0	2	3	12	17
	Importer	0	0	0	0	0
Zimbabwe	Exporter	0	0	2	1	3
	Importer	47	35	9	26	117
Total	**Exporter**	**22**	**51**	**47**	**117**	**237**
	Importer	**79**	**53**	**21**	**55**	**208**

Source: CITES Trade Database 2023. Compiled by UNEP-WCMC for the CITES Secretariat. Available at: trade.cites.org. Accessed 23/08/2023.

NR= No report received at the time of writing (July 2023).
* 'Wild-sourced' only includes trade recorded as source 'W' and 'U'. No trade in tusks reported by number was reported without a source specified.

*Table 2. Direct trade in wild-sourced** Loxodonta africana *tusks as reported by weight (kg) from range States, 2018-2021 (all purposes), rounded to the nearest kilogram.*

		Tusks reported by weight (kg)				
Exporter	**Reported by**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**Total**
Zimbabwe	Exporter	4778	2144	1875	5159	13955
	Importer	461	26	210	0	697

Source: CITES Trade Database 2023. Compiled by UNEP-WCMC for the CITES Secretariat. Available at: trade.cites.org. Accessed 23/08/2023.

* 'Wild-sourced' only includes trade recorded as source 'W'. No trade in tusks reported by weight (kg) was reported as source 'U' or without a source specified.

Table 3. Direct trade in wild-sourced sport-hunted** trophies of* Loxodonta africana *from range States, 2018-2021.*

		Number of trophies				
Exporter	**Reported by**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**Total**
Botswana	Exporter	0	1	0	54	55
	Importer	0	2	0	26	28
Cameroon	Exporter	2	5	3	2	12
	Importer	2	7	1	0	10
Mozambique	Exporter	10	3	2	5	20
	Importer	9	6	9	6	30
Namibia	Exporter	69	33	24	0	126
	Importer	64	26	8	16	114
South Africa	Exporter	43	54	22	60	179
	Importer	41	11	3	25	80
United Republic of Tanzania	Exporter	4	9	5	NR	18
	Importer	16	10	2	9	37
Zambia	Exporter	8	4	7	8	27
	Importer	9	20	11	12	52
Zimbabwe	Exporter	156	70	62	100	388
	Importer	231	105	88	82	506
Total	**Exporter**	**292**	**179**	**125**	**229**	**825**
	Importer	**372**	**187**	**122**	**176**	**857**

Source: CITES Trade Database 2023. Compiled by UNEP-WCMC for the CITES Secretariat. Available at: trade.cites.org. Accessed 23/08/2023.

NR= No report received at the time of writing (July 2023).
* 'Wild-sourced' only includes trade recorded as source 'W' or without a source specified. No trade in trophies was reported as source 'U'.
** 'Sport-hunted trophies' consist of trade in 'trophies' reported as purposes 'H', 'P' and 'T' as well as those without a purpose specified. This does not include trade in other 'trophy' items such as skins, skulls, ears, tails, etc, reported as such.

Estimates of numbers of individuals and tusks in trade

87. When the number of individual elephants involved in the trade is estimated (by assuming that for the tusks presented in Table 1 two tusks equal one individual and that each trophy presented in Table 3 equals one individual), exports reported by most range States increased 2018-2021 (Table 4): Botswana (from zero to 72 individuals), Kenya (zero to one individual), South Africa (~44 to 66 individuals) and Zambia (eight to 14 individuals). Exports reported by two range States decreased over this period: Mozambique (from 11 to six individuals) and Zimbabwe (from 156 to ~101 individuals). Exports reported by one range State remained the same (Cameroon, two individuals). The United Republic of Tanzania's annual report for 2021 had not yet been received at the time of writing, but according to importers, there was a decrease in exports (from 17 to nine individuals). Note that these estimates do not consider trade reported by weight (only applicable to Zimbabwe).

88. When the export quotas for tusks as sport-hunted trophies are compared with exporter-reported and importer-reported data for both tusks and hunting trophies (assuming that one trophy includes two tusks), four exporting range States appear to have exceeded their export quotas (published as zero quotas[29]) over the period 2018-2021 (Table 4). These quotas appear to have been potentially exceeded by the following range States: Cameroon (each year 2018-2021), Kenya (in 2021), Mozambique (in 2019), and South Africa (in 2019). Several range States had not informed the Secretariat of a quota, in which case a zero quota was established (as outlined by CITES Resolution

[29] The CITES Resolution on 'Trade in elephant specimens' (currently CITES Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP19)) stipulates that if a range State does not submit its export quota to the CITES Secretariat in writing by the relevant deadline for the following calendar year, a zero export quota is issued.

Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP19)). In this context, reference is made to the section on reporting issues in paragraphs 94 and 95 below.

89. The zero quotas published for Cameroon for 2018-2021[30] appear to have been exceeded as reported by both Cameroon and the countries of import in 2018-2020, and by Cameroon alone in 2021. In 2018 and 2019, the zero quota appears to have been exceeded by four tusks (two individuals) and 14 tusks (seven individuals), respectively, as reported by both Cameroon and importers. In 2020, the zero quota was apparently exceeded by six tusks (three individuals) as reported by Cameroon, and by two tusks (one individual) as reported by importers. In 2021, the apparent excess was four tusks (two individuals) as reported by Cameroon only (Table 4). All trade was reported by Cameroon and importers as wild-sourced (source code 'W') and for hunting trophy purposes (purpose code 'H').

90. Kenya appears to have exceeded the zero export quota[30] published for 2021 by two tusks (one individual) according to data reported by Kenya and the country of import (Table 4); these tusks were reported as wild-sourced (source code 'W') and for personal purposes (purpose code 'P').

91. Mozambique appears to have exceeded the zero export quota[30] published for 2019 by 12 tusks (six individuals) according to data reported by Mozambique, and by 14 tusks (seven individuals) as reported by importing countries (Table 4). All trade reported by Mozambique and importers was wild-sourced (source code 'W'). Six of the tusks reported by Mozambique were for hunting trophy purposes (purpose code 'H') and the remaining six were reported with purpose code 'T' (commercial purposes) along with other trophy parts. Importers reported the trade as for hunting trophy purposes (12 tusks) and personal purposes (purpose code 'P'; two tusks).

92. The zero quota published for South Africa for 2019[30] appears to have been exceeded by 120 tusks (60 individuals) as reported by South Africa and by 22 tusks (11 individuals) as reported by importers (Table 4). Both South Africa and importers reported this trade as wild-sourced (source code 'W'); South Africa reported trade for hunting trophy or personal purposes, while importers reported trade for hunting trophy purposes.

93. In accordance with CITES Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP19), it is recommended that Parties communicate their export quotas to the CITES Secretariat in writing by 1 December if they intend to trade in the following calendar year.

[30] The CITES Resolution on 'Trade in elephant specimens' (currently CITES Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP19)) stipulates that if a range State does not submit its export quota to the CITES Secretariat in writing by the relevant deadline for the following calendar year, a zero-export quota is issued.

*Table 4. Estimated trade in wild-sourced*** Loxodonta africana *tusks calculated based on the total number of reported tusks combined with an estimate of the number of tusks reported in trade as "trophies"* directly exported by range States 2018-2021, and export quotas for* Loxodonta africana *tusks as sport-hunted trophies 2018-2023 established in compliance with Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP19) on trade in elephant specimens. Potential quota excesses based on the estimated tusks are indicated in **bold**. Trade data for 2022 and 2023 were not yet available at the time of writing. All quantities are reported by number; tusks reported by weight have been excluded from estimates (applies to exports from Zimbabwe only). Only sport-hunted trophies (reported as purpose 'H', 'P' or 'T' or without a purpose specified) have been included in the estimates; trade in trophy items (i.e. reported as skull, skin, etc.) has been excluded.*

		2018		2019		2020		2021		2022	2023
Exporter	**Reported by**	**Estimated No. of tusks***	**Quota (# tusks)**	**Estimated No. of tusks***	**Quota (# tusks)**	**Estimated No. of tusks***	**Quota (# tusks)**	**Estimated No. of tusks***	**Quota (# tusks)**	**Quota (# tusks)**	**Quota (# tusks)**
Botswana	Exporter	0	0	12	200	0	800	144	800	800	800
	Importer	0	0	4	200	0	800	57	800		
Cameroon	Exporter	**4**	0	**14**	0	**6**	0	**4**	0	0	0
	Importer	**4**	0	**14**	0	**2**	0	0	0		
Kenya	Exporter	0	0	0	0	0	0	**2**	0	0	0
	Importer	0	0	0	0	0	0	**2**	0		
Mozambique	Exporter	22	66	**12**	0	6	24	12	66	66	0
	Importer	18	66	**14**	0	18	24	14	66		
Namibia	Exporter	153	180	82	180	68	180	52	180	180	180
	Importer	149	180	66	180	20	180	36	180		
South Africa	Exporter	87	300	**120**	0	62	300	132	300	300	0
	Importer	91	300	**22**	0	12	300	66	300		
United Republic of Tanzania	Exporter	12	100	19	100	12	100	NR	100	100	100
	Importer	34	100	22	100	6	100	18	100		
Zambia	Exporter	16	160	10	160	17	160	28	160	160	160
	Importer	18	160	40	160	22	160	24	160		
Zimbabwe	Exporter	312	1000	140	1000	126	1000	201	1000	1000	1000
	Importer	509	1000	245	1000	185	1000	190	1000		

Source: CITES Trade Database 2023. Compiled by UNEP-WCMC for the CITES Secretariat. Available at: trade.cites.org. Accessed 23/08/2023.

* Total number of tusks estimated based on the number of tusks reported plus two times the number of trophies reported (with the assumption that one trophy corresponds to one individual and therefore contains two tusks).
** 'Wild-sourced' only includes trade recorded as source 'W', source 'U' or without a source specified.
NR= No report received at the time of writing (July 2023).

Reporting issue

94. The analysis of hunting trophy data is complicated by the variety of ways in which hunting trophies can be reported. The *Guidelines for the preparation and submission of CITES annual report*s[31] states that all the trophy parts of one animal, e.g. an elephant's two tusks, four feet, two ears and one tail, constitute one 'trophy' if they are exported together on the same permit. However, in practice, many Parties do not follow the *Guidelines* consistently and this can potentially lead to double-counting of trophies. The annual report data are therefore processed in accordance with the *Guidelines*: where multiple constituent parts are reported with the same export permit, these are generally recorded in the CITES Trade Database as one shipment using the term trophy ('TRO') according to the number of individuals reported. However, standardisation in reporting of hunting trophies through application of the *Guidelines* by Parties, in particular for species such as *L. africana* where export quotas have been established, is crucial to assessing compliance with the provisions of the Convention.

95. Serial numbers provided within annual reports can provide valuable insight for verification of quota compliance and this information could be collected more systematically through the CITES Trade Database to support CITES implementation if Parties request this. Adoption of electronic permitting and automated transfer of trade data to the CITES Trade Database would facilitate this and should be considered as a means for enhancing transparency and traceability for all species with quotas and tagging/marking systems.

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[31] *The current guidelines are those published under CITES Notification No. 2023/039 on 29/03/2023.*

African elephants (*Loxodonta Africana)*: Conservation status

96. This section has been prepared by the IUCN/SSC African Elephant Specialist Group (AfESG).

Status, Threats, Conservation Strategies and Action Plan

Reporting of the Forest and Savanna elephants

97. The African Elephant Specialist Group (AfESG) decided in 2021 to treat African elephants as two separate species, following new research into their genetics (Wilson and Reeder, 2005[32], Kingdon et al., 2013[33], Hart et al., 2011[34]). This is reflected in the ongoing update of the 2023 status reports and also in the recently published IUCN Red List re-assessments in which African forest elephant (*Loxodonta cyclotis*) was listed as Critically Endangered (Gobush et al., 2021a[35]) and the African savanna elephant (*Loxodonta Africana*) was listed as Endangered (Gobush et al., 2022b [36]).

98. Prior to the two-species recognition, it was challenging to assess the practical implications for their conservation. Accordingly, producing two separate Red List assessments and two separate status reports will provide opportunities at national, regional and global levels to prioritise actions specific to each species and its unique circumstances. As reported in SC74 this distinct treatment will refocus and renew attention on the plight and conservation of each species.

99. The African Forest Elephant Status Report (AFESR) and African Savanna Elephant Status Report (ASESR) 2023 will be the sixth AESRs produced by the AfESG. Like their predecessors, they aim to provide the most authoritative, comprehensive, and up-to-date information on the numbers and distribution of the two species of African elephants at national, regional, and continental levels. The last admissible data collected for these reports was as of July 2023.

100. The AFESR presents more than 270 new or updated estimates for elephant populations across Africa, with over 180 of these arising from systematic surveys.

Continental overview of forest elephant populations

101. In the draft AfESR 2023, the forest elephants cover 22 range countries (West Africa – Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire; Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo; Central Africa – Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon; Eastern Africa – Rwanda, South Sudan and Uganda; and Southern Africa – Angola). The estimated number of forest elephants in areas surveyed since 2015 in Africa is about 135,677 animals (95% c.i. 132,968-140,849; Figure 1)[37] at the time of the last survey for each area. There may be an additional 7,030 to 8,726 elephants in areas not systematically surveyed. The entire forest elephant population (Estimates plus Guesses) may number about 142,000 animals.

[32]Wilson, D. E., & Reeder, D. M. (Eds.). 2005. *Mammal species of the world: a taxonomic and geographic reference* (Vol. 1). JHU press.

[33]Kingdon, J., D. Happold, M. Hoffman, T. Butynski, M. Happold, and K. J. 2013. Mammals of Africa Volume I: Introductory chapters and Afrotheria. Page 351 in J. Kingdon, Happold, D., Hoffman, M., Butynski, T., Happold, M. & Kalina J., editor. Mammals of Africa. Bloomsbury Publishing, London, New Delhi, New York, Sydney

[34]Hart, J., Gobush, K., Maisels, F., Wasser, S., Okita-Ouma, B., & Slotow, R. 2021. African forest and savanna elephants treated as separate species. Oryx, 55(2), 170-171.

[35]Gobush, K.S., Edwards, C.T.T, Maisels, F., Wittemyer, G., Balfour, D. & Taylor, R.D. 2021a. *Loxodonta cyclotis* (errata version published in 2021). The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2021: e.T181007989A204404464. https://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2021-1.RLTS.T181007989A204404464.en. Accessed on 25 September 2022.

[36]Gobush, K.S., Edwards, C.T.T, Balfour, D., Wittemyer, G., Maisels, F. & Taylor, R.D. 2021b. Loxodonta africana (amended version of 2021 assessment). The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2021: e.T181008073A204401095. https://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2021-2.RLTS.T181008073A204401095.en. Accessed on 25 September 2022.

[37]Draft AfESR 2023 AFRICAN FOREST ELEPHANT (*Loxodonta cyclotis*) STATUS REPORT 2023 An Update from the African Elephant Database

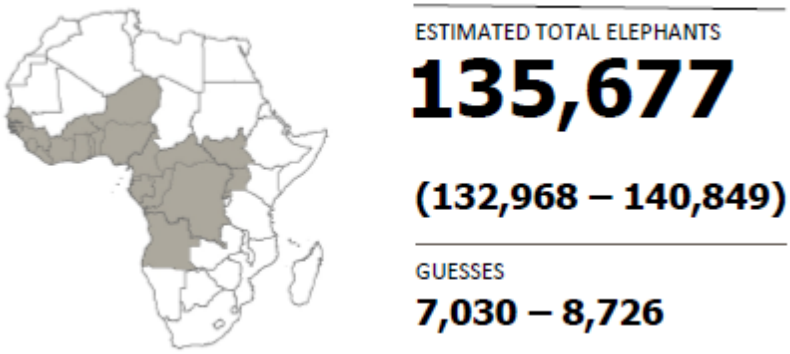
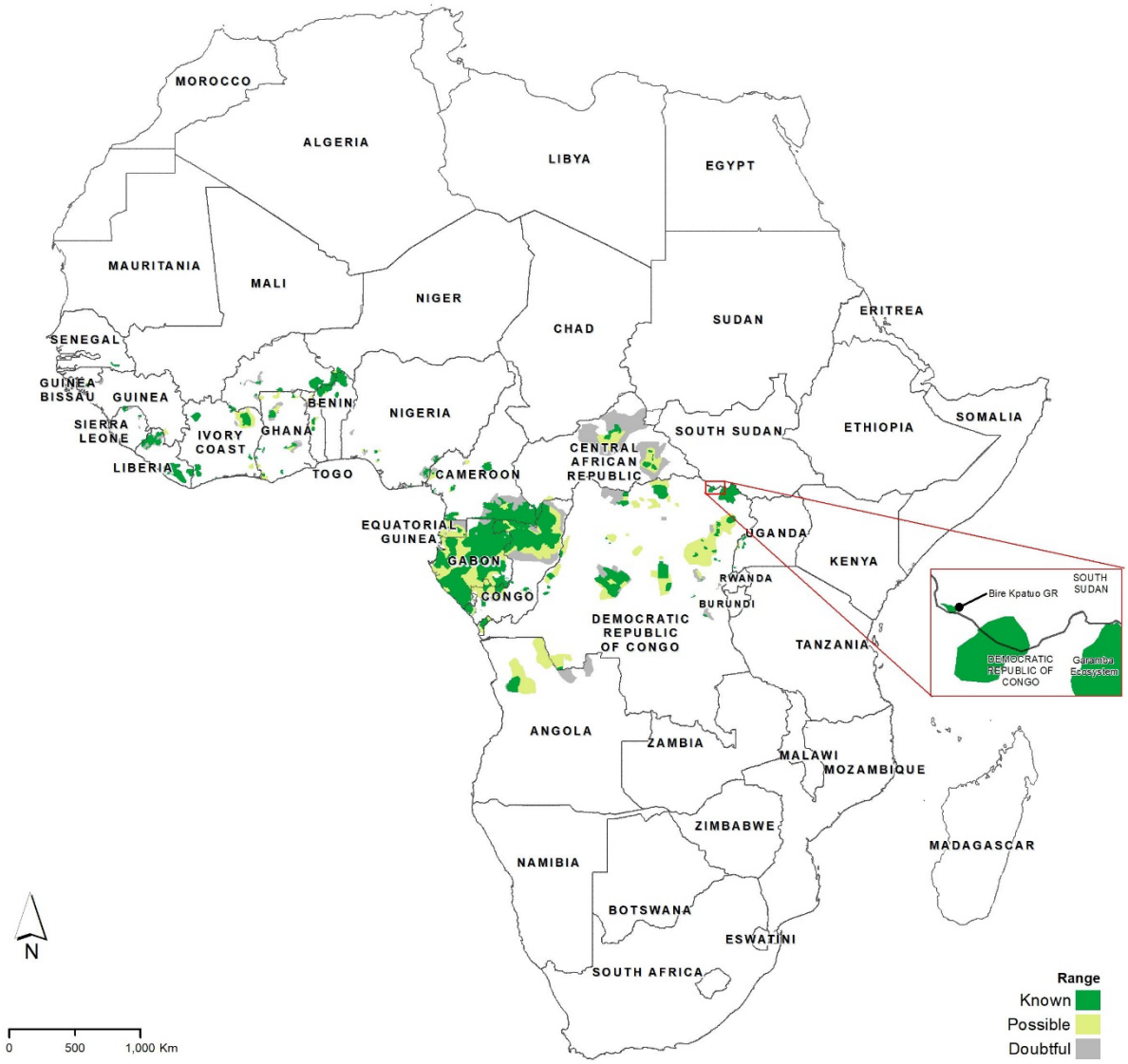


Figure 1: Summary of African Forest elephant population

Source: draft AfESR 2023

102. Forest elephants' *Known* and *Possible* range is about 947,200 km^2; about 65% of the entire range was surveyed between 2016 and 2022. There remains an additional 35% of range for which no elephant population estimates are available, although it is likely that average elephant densities in this range are much lower than in the surveyed areas (Map 1).



Map 1: Map of Africa showing the African Forest Elephant range - July 2023. The green shaded areas are known elephant range, light green possible elephant range and grey doubtful elephant range (*Source: draft AfESR 2023*).

Regional overview of forest elephant populations

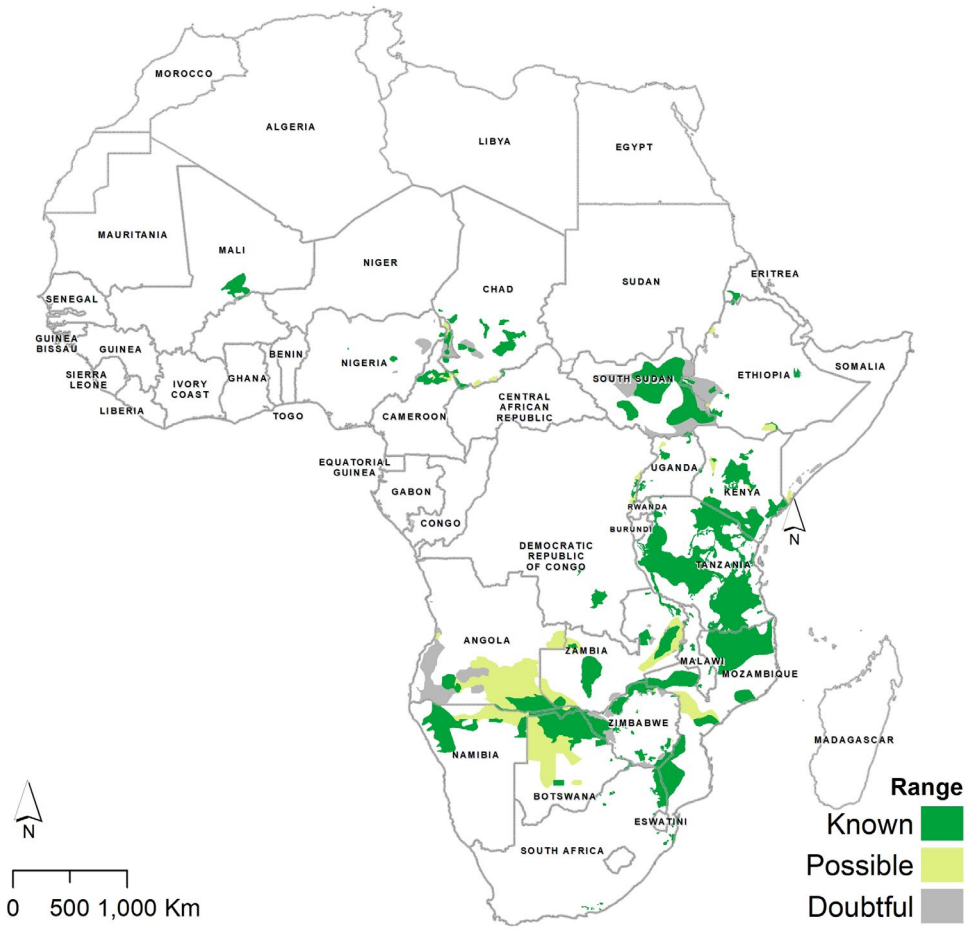
103. The preliminary findings in the draft AfESR indicate that Central Africa has by far the largest number of forest elephants in any of the four regions. It holds over 97% of the estimated forest elephants in Africa (93% of estimated and guessed elephants) in 57% of the total range area for the species. West Africa has 3% of estimated elephants (5% of estimated and guessed elephants) in 10% of the range, while East and Southern Africa combined make up the remaining 0.02% of estimates (0.7% of estimated and guessed forest elephants).

104. Improved knowledge of elephant distribution is reflected by the proportion of range categorised as *Known*, which has increased. The actual distribution of elephants across this range varies considerably across the four regions – from small, fragmented populations in West Africa to large, virtually undisturbed tracts of elephant range in Central Africa, with a mixture in Eastern Africa. Map 1 from the draft AESR 2023 shows the range of the Forest elephants as of 2023. The final report to be published later in 2023 will provide more country-level and regional-level details of the status.

Continental overview of savanna elephant populations

105. African savanna elephant populations are distributed across 24 African countries: Eastern Africa (Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda); southern Africa (Angola, Botswana, Eswatini, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe); Central Africa (Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo); and in West Africa (Burkina Faso, Mali, Nigeria) (See Map 2). AfESG provided estimates for some savanna elephant populations as of November 2022 as contained in CITES CoP 19 Inf. 64 (Rev.1)[38]. The estimates were for South Africa, Zimbabwe, Namibia and Botswana. These estimates are being updated in the Savanna elephant status report 2023.

[38] *The status of Africa's elephants and updates on issues relevant to cites. Submitted by the Secretariat on behalf of the IUCN/SSC African Elephant Specialist Group (AfESG) in relation with CoP19 Proposals 4 & 5, CoP19 Doc 84.1 and CoP19 Inf. 4* https://cites.org/sites/default/files/documents/E-CoP19-Inf-64-R1_0.pdf



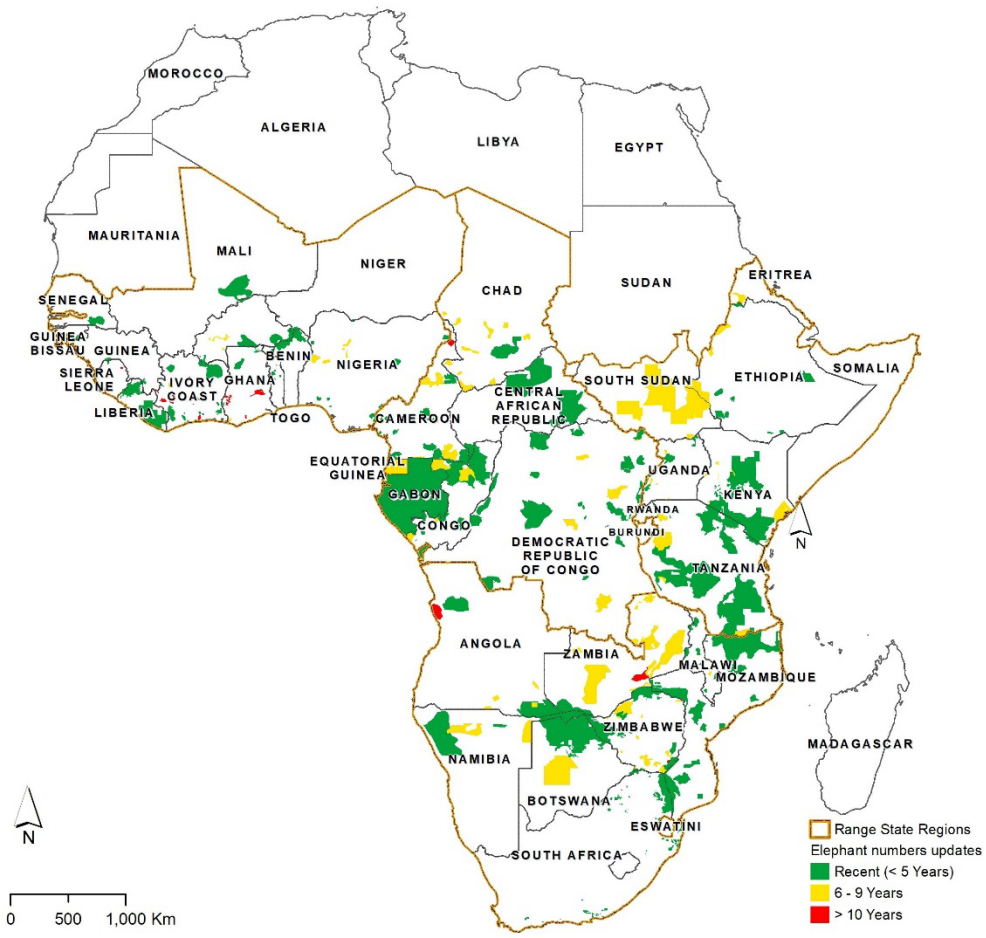
Map 2: Map of Africa showing the African Savanna Elephant range - July 2023. The green shaded areas are known elephant range, light green possible elephant range and grey doubtful elephant range (*Source: draft AfESR 2023*).

106. A complete status report for African savanna elephants in 2023 will include Kavango Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area (KAZA) elephant numbers whose survey was completed in October 2022, with a final report expected before the end of 2023. A combined KAZA (Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe) transboundary population was estimated at 220,000 animals in 2016. This comprised almost 50% of the savanna elephant population.

Priority for future elephant surveys

107. Future surveys should prioritise West Africa and Eastern Africa in particular and areas with small elephant population, as many of the numbers were categorised as guesses as opposed to Estimates. These small populations may be very important from a species conservation perspective. There have been some areas where known range has increased, thanks to better information from the field. More resources are needed to be invested in these range countries to conduct systematics surveys.

108. The 2023 elephant status reports will provide levels of details of surveys required in all range states. For example, the latest data with AfESG as of July 2023 indicate that forests elephant population(s) in Equatorial Guinea, Uganda, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Guinea, and Sierra Leone have not been surveyed since 2016. The same applied to some savanna elephant population(s) in Cameroon, Chad, Eretria, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda, Angola, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Some 22 forest elephants and 4 savanna elephant populations seem to have been lost since 2016. These are shown in Map 3 and by regions in Tables 1a and 1b.



Map 3: Map of Africa showing the status of AED updates of 32 elephant range countries as of July 2023. The green shaded areas are elephant input zones updated in the last 5 years; yellow shaded areas are elephant input zones updated 6 to 9 years ago; and red shaded areas are input zones updated 10 years ago or more (*Source: draft AfESR 2023*).

Table 1a: Summary of the updates of the AED for African Forest Elephant, July 20223

Region	New information (>2016)	Old information (<2016)	Population lost	Grand total	Systematic Surveys
Central Africa	131	19	3	153	107
Eastern Africa	6	4	0	10	6
Southern Africa	1	0	0	1	0
West Africa	70	18	19	107	22
Grand Total	**208**	**41**	**22**	**271**	**135**

Table 1b: Summary of the updates of the AED for African Savanna Elephant, July 20223

Region	New information (>2016)	Old information (<2016)	Population lost	Grand total	Systematic Surveys
Central Africa	13	22	3	38	10
Eastern Africa	55	29	1	85	44
Southern Africa	254	122	0	376	233

West Africa	6	0	0	6	6
Grand Total	**328**	**173**	**4**	**505**	**293**

Threats

109. Poaching and conflict-related deaths can impact the elephant population significantly in the four geographical regions – Central, West, Southern and Eastern Africa. The elephant population, range and connectivity varies amongst countries and regions. West Africa's elephant populations are mostly small, fragmented and isolated and make up only about 5% of the entire forest elephant population. With increasing human populations and infrastructural development, many countries in West Africa are experiencing increased pressure on natural areas from mining, logging and rapid transformation of land to agriculture: between 1900 and 2013 approximately 90% of the Upper Guinean forests had been lost (CILSS 2016[39]). There will be more conflict between people and elephants and habitat loss unless proactive and appropriate measures are undertaken to prevent or curb the impact.

110. Another factor that can contribute to declining elephant population is poaching. Central Africa's forest elephants have been severely affected by ivory poaching since about 2003 (Maisels *et al*., 2013[40]; Wittemyer *et al*., 2014[41]). Evidence from the carcass reports sent to MIKE shows that poaching was already a problem in this region by 2003, long before it became unsustainable in Eastern Africa (CITES Secretariat, 2016[42]). The number of illegal killings has been declining since 2016, falling below the PIKE threshold of 0.5 in 2020, but there is evidence for an uptick in 2021 (CITES 2022[43]) and large quantities of ivory continued to be seized at least to 2019 (ETIS 2022[44]; Wasser *et al.* 2022[45]).

Engagement with range states

111. There was a huge slowdown between 2019 and 2021 in physically visiting the range countries due to Covid19. It was recognized that the AED needs to speed up on working on the savanna elephant status report and one way was to visit the range countries and work on assembling data and range maps with country focal point institutions and experts. The AED personnel visited Tanzania, Ethiopia, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe. To strengthen the relationships MOUs for a number of countries are being developed or reviewed.

Conservation Action Plans and Strategies for elephant conservation

African Elephant Action Plan (AEAP)

112. This revision of the AEAP (2023) updates the AEAP (2010). This revision builds on the experience of the first 12 years of implementing the AEAP and draws on the collective expertise of the AERS as well as technical support from members of the IUCN/SSC African Elephant Specialist Group (AfESG). Contributions from these groups were collated largely through the proceedings of two workshop sessions conducted in 2019. Progress in the revision was then delayed in 2020 due to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. Revisions to the Action Plan resumed in the latter half of 2021 and over the course of 2022, resulting in the formal adoption of the revised AEAP in March 2023.

113. AfESG has started working on some of the objectives such as; reduction of human-elephant conflict and maintenance of the African elephant habitats and restoration of connectivity by developing guidelines that can be used by the elephant range countries.

[39]CILSS. 2016. Landscapes of West Africa – A Window on a Changing World. USAID/ US Geological Service, EROS, Garretson, USA.
[40]Maisels F, Strindberg S, Blake S, Wittemyer G, Hart J, Williamson EA, et al. (2013) Devastating Decline of Forest Elephants in Central Africa. PLoS ONE 8(3): e59469. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0059469

[41] Wittemyer G, Northrup JM, Blanc J, Douglas-Hamilton I, Omondi P, Burnham KP. 2014. Illegal killing for ivory drives global decline in African elephants. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences 111:13117–13121.
[42] CITES, 2016**.** 2016 trends in African elephant poaching released – CITES MIKE programme
[43]CITES. 2022. Report on Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE). CoP19 Doc. 66.5. CITES, Geneva.
[44]ETIS. 2022. Report on the Elephant Trade Information System (ETIS). CoP19 Doc. 66.6 CITES, Geneva.

[45]Wasser SK, Wolock CJ, Kuhner MK, Brown JE 3rd, Morris C, Horwitz RJ, Wong A, Fernandez CJ, Otiende MY, Hoareau Y, Kaliszewska ZA, Jeon E, Han KL, Weir BS. Elephant genotypes reveal the size and connectivity of transnational ivory traffickers. Nat Hum Behav. 2022;6(3):371-382. doi: 10.1038/s41562-021-01267-6. Epub 2022 Feb 14. PMID: 35165434.

Regional and national elephant action planning

Regional level

114. AfESG is supporting the review of the Kavango - Zambezi Trans frontier Conservation Area (KAZA-TFCA) report on recent surveys of the 5 KAZA countries of Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The survey will provide baseline data on the numbers and distribution of elephants in KAZA to help inform the development of collective policy and practice among the KAZA partner countries for the long-term conservation, protection, and management of Africa's largest contiguous elephant population. Its results will also provide crucial information to update scientific databases such as the African Elephant Database.

National level

115. AfESG continues to be involved, either directly as a group or through its expert members in their personal capacities or collaboratively, in providing support to range States with the development of elephant strategies and National Elephant Action Plans (NEAPs). Most NEAPs are *aligned with the aspirations of the African Range States* through the AEAP. It further streamlines its activities.

116. Table 2 provides an update since the last reporting to SC74 in 2021 of the progress made by range States in terms of the development or review of their NEAPs.

Table 2: Progress made by range States in the development or review of their national elephant action plans (in red updated) from 2021 MIKES report.

Elephant management plans			
Central Africa	Eastern Africa	Southern Africa	West Africa
Cameroon: • AWF to work with national wildlife agency to renew Cameroon National Elephant Action Plan during 2023/2024 fiscal year.	*Ethiopia:* • Elephant Action plan (2015 – 2025) was endorsed by the Prime Minister. • Implementation is being undertaken by relevant conservation authority and partners.	*Angola:* • Elephant management plan updated in April 2020.	*Cote d'ivore:* • 2003 plan is being updated with the most recent information.
Congo: • Elephant management plan was developed and approved by the relevant Minister in 2017 following a workshop by the government representatives, experts on elephant conservation, and national and international stakeholders.	*Kenya:* • Kenya launched National Elephant Action Plan 2023 – 2032 on 3rd March 2023 by Cabinet Secretary Peninah Malonza • A number of AfESG members participated in the development of the strategy.	*Botswana:* • *Elephant Management Plan 2021-2026 was launched by Vice President Mr. Slumber Tsogwane in Maun.*	*Liberia:* • Plan developed at a workshop in 2016 has been expanded and refined by EPI so that it aligns with the AEAP. • Final version submitted to the President for signature.
Gabon: • NEAP was finished in early 2019 and is being implemented.	*Tanzania:* • Tanzania NEAP report is almost complete waiting national validation by stakeholders. TAWIRI is leading the exercise.	*Malawi:* • 2015 – 2025 plan not properly aligned to AEAP, but has been extensively used and implemented	*Nigeria:* • Nigeria is planning to release its Elephant Action Plan in 2023. • The exercise is led by Federal Ministry of Environment. The *draft plan was reviewed by number of AfESG members.*

Elephant management plans			
Central Africa	Eastern Africa	Southern Africa	West Africa
-	*Uganda:* • Elephant Conservation Plan for Uganda 2016-2026. Being implemented by Uganda Wildlife Authority.	*Mozambique:* • Draft plan produced in 2017 following a workshop in Maputo, but is yet to be finalized	*Chad:* • Elephant management plan was completed in 2018 and refined in 2019 and will be implemented when funds become available
-	-	*South Africa:* • South Africa does not have a NEAP. They have a National norms and standards for the management of elephants that governs elephant management and are currently in the process of developing a national elephant heritage strategy.	-
		Zambia: • Strategic Elephant Conservation and Management Plan for Zambia, 2021-2025. Department of National Parks and Wildlife.	
-	-	*Zimbabwe*: • 2021-2025 National Elephant Management plan - Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority	-

117. AfESG will continue to provide inputs and technical support to the NEAP processes. NEAPs are important frameworks for conserving elephants and for facilitating reporting of elephant status across Africa and increasing the robustness of data used for a wide range of decisions. Range States are encouraged to develop and implement their NEAPs.

Asian elephants (*Elephas maximus*): Status, Threats and Conservation actions

118. This section has been prepared by the IUCN/SSC Asian Elephant Specialist Group (AsESG)*.

119. The Asian Elephant Specialist Group (AsESG) is a global network of specialists studying, managing, monitoring, and conserving Asian elephants (*Elephas maximus*) across their 13 Range States in Asia. The overall aim of the AsESG is to promote the long-term conservation of Asia's elephants and, where possible, recover populations to viable levels; provide sound scientific and technical advice to aid decision-making and conservation actions; and build the capacity of Asian Elephant Range States to manage the species and the challenges it faces.

120. This report provides an update since the report submitted to the 74th Standing Committee report.

121. Asian elephants are found in 13 range countries with nearly 60% of the population being present in India. Other countries with relatively large populations are Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia. Smaller populations are found in Cambodia and Lao PDR. The countries of Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, and Vietnam have very small populations numbering a few hundred or fewer. While the Asian Elephant population is estimated to be 30,000 to 50,000, in most cases this estimate is not based on sound data and is largely compiled from historic reports. Approximately, 15,000 (AERSM, 2017; Menon and Tiwari, 2019) of the world's Asian elephants are living in captivity, representing at least 25% of the entire Asian elephant population. The largest single population of captive elephants is in Myanmar and numbers about 6,000 individuals.

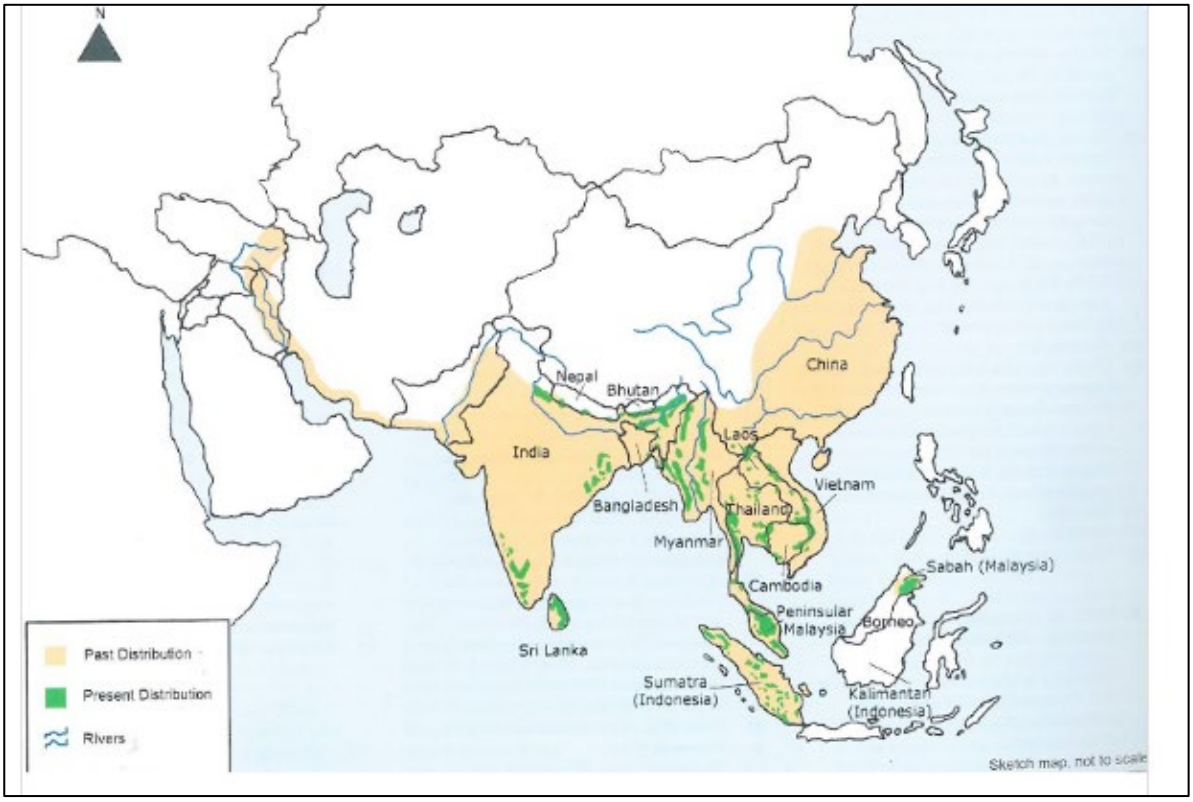


Figure 1: Asian elephant distribution map

Source: Sukumar (2011)

122. Asian elephants are endangered due to their ongoing decline of their populations (Ling *et al.* 2016). As of 2018, population size estimates collated across all range countries, suggest a global Asian Elephant abundance of 48,323–51,680 individuals in the wild (Menon and Tiwari 2019). Although the overall Asian elephant populations remains stable in Asia but the further decline of elephant population in Bangladesh,

* *The geographical designations employed in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the CITES Secretariat (or the United Nations Environment Programme) concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or area, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The responsibility for the contents of the document rests exclusively with its author*

Indonesia, Lao PDR, Sabah Malaysia and Myanmar in comparison to the population estimation in 2019 are of concern (Menon and Tiwari, 2019, AERSM, 2022; 11th AsESG meeting 2023). As such, the small wild elephant population (less than 500) left in the wild in countries like Vietnam (104-134), Nepal (227), Bangladesh (260), China (300) and Cambodia (400-600) is alarming.

The current population of wild and captive Asian elephants is as below:

Sl. No.	**Country**	**Wild elephant population 2019** **Source: William *et al.*, 2020**	**Wild elephant population 2023** **Source: 11th AsESG meeting 2023; * Third Asian elephant range state meeting, 2022**
1	Bangladesh	289–437	260 (210-330)
2	Bhutan	605–761	678
3	Cambodia	400–600	400-600
4	China	300	300*
5	India	29964	29964
6	Indonesia	1,784–1,804	928-1379
7	Lao PDR	500–600	300-400
8	Peninsular Malaysia	1,223–1,677	1223-1677
9	Sabah Malaysia	2040	1000-1500
10	Myanmar	2,000–4,000	1500-2000
11	Nepal	109–145	227
12	Sri Lanka	5879	5879
13	Thailand	3,126–3,341	4013-4422
14	Vietnam	104–132	104-134

123. In many of the Asian elephant range states, massive destruction of forest, due to agricultural practices, conversion to plantations, logging, industrial establishments, linear infrastructural developments and mining has put pressure on the remaining Asian elephant population (Ling *et al.* 2016; Calabrese *et al.*, 2017; Yang *et al*., 2019; Vijayakrishnan *et al.,* 2020; Thant *et al*., 2023). Asian elephant populations have likely declined due to habitat loss (Menon and Tiwari, 2019; Chan *et al*., 2022), illegal killing (Kalam *et al.*, 2018; Ghosh *et al*., 2022), capture of live elephants for the timber industry and other purposes (Mar, 2020), consequences of severe human-elephant conflict (Chowdhury, 2017; Kalam *et* al., 2018; Butler, 2019; Srinivasaiah, 2019; Fernando *et al*., 2021; Gunawansa, 2023) and poaching for their ivory, skin and meat (Sampson *et al.* 2018; Thant *et al*., 2023; Zhao, 2023).

124. Persistent poaching across several landscapes contributes to selective removal of males (Davidar, *et al*., 2015; Sampson *et al.* 2018) while recent reports of poaching for skin and suggests additional emerging threats which puts pressure on females and juveniles as well (Sampson *et al*., 2018; Thant *et al*., 2023). Elephant poaching for skin and meat in Myanmar is widespread (Sampson *et al*., 2018; Thant *et al*., 2023) and elephant skin and bones are used to produce a medicinal paste, elephant skin to make bracelets and elephant feet and trunks for furniture or decoration (Sampson *et al.* 2018).

125. ***Ivory trade –*** Ivory continues to be traded in many Asian countries because of ineffective policies, weak enforcement, porous international borders and corruption (Reuter and O'Regan 2017). Poaching of elephants for ivory trade is not a major concern in Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and Sri Lanka. There are no online ivory trade markets in these countries. However, vigilance in Chattogram in Bangladesh may be increased due to recent surge in ivory seizures in the area (Bangladesh FD, 2023). The southern part of

Bhutan including the Royal Manas National Park could be the hotspot for illegal ivory trade due to recent instances of poaching and electrocution of elephants for tusks (Bhutan FD, 2023).

126. With the ban of ivory trade in China in 2017, Chinese demand for ivory has declined (Gao *et al*., 2022). Already one-third of China's ivory carving factories and retail have been shut down (Gao *et al*, 2022). However, the Chinese merchants are suspected to have moved their operations to other South East Asian countries such as Vietnam and Lao PDR (Stiles, 2021). Most sales on worked ivory, however, are still done in shops, market stalls or person-to-person where law enforcement is weak. There are still some die-hard ivory consumers in China who purchase their ivory outside China while travelling tourists to Japan, Vietnam, Laos, and Myanmar (Stiles, 2021). The vendors of Burmese border town of Mong La have established a wildlife trading hub from which products like ivory and elephant skin can be transported into China (Stephens and Southerland, 2018). However, there is a downward trend in the rate of purchase of ivory in China which is encouraging.

127. In Cambodia, much of the ivory originates from elsewhere, probably Africa but recently the poaching and ivory seizures in the country has decreased drastically. Though no illegal or online markets in Cambodia is recorded to exist, market ivory surveys in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap suggest that there is a demand for ivory from Chinese, Vietnamese and Cambodian buyers, amongst others (GDANCP, 2020). There is some indication that this demand is increasing, and there is a risk that international buyers may enter Cambodia to purchase ivory for re-sale in their countries of origin (GDANCP, 2020). This may increase demand for imports of ivory and other elephant parts to Cambodia, and potentially lead to poaching of local elephant to meet such demand.

128. In Myanmar poaching for ivory have been reported from Boat Pyin Township, Kawthaung District, Taninthayi Division and Thar Paung & Pathein Township, Pathein District, Ayeyarwady Division (Report of Govt. of Myanmar submitted to IUCN SSC AsESG, 2023). Hunting and ivory trade may be much higher than previously thought and contribute significantly to poaching pressures (Budd *et al.*, 2021). The ivory trade is long-established in Myanmar with ivory carving a multigenerational family business in some cases, especially in the traditional ivory carving centre of Mandalay. Ivory is sourced in, as well as imported into, Myanmar, carved or processed, and then sold to local buyers or to foreigners (especially Chinese and Thai nationals) both through legal and illegal markets (MECAP, 2018). China, Thailand and India border Myanmar and two new ports being planned in Myanmar could increase the use of Myanmar as a transit point for illegal wildlife trafficking. Construction of major new roads a worrying potential for the country to become an important transit country for illegal ivory to neighbouring countries (MECAP, 2018). Policing and regulating wildlife trade in autonomous regions within Myanmar, especially along the border with China and the eastern border with Thailand, is a major challenge. Cross border security is a concern due to weak law and enforcement, limited budget, insufficient staff, limited technical capacity and limited cross sectoral and transboundary collaborations (MECAP, 2018).

129. Viet Nam, Malaysia and Cambodia are among the major countries of transit or destination of shipment of ivory from African elephants. Other transit countries include Lao PDR, Singapore, Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand (). In Viet Nam, 13 tonnes of ivory smuggled from Africa was seized this year (Reuters, 2023). In 2019, 48,217 kilograms of ivory were seized in the main demand countries of China (including Hong Kong), Vietnam, Thailand, Laos and Cambodia (Stiles, 2021). Few traditional crafts villages around Hanoi in Viet Nam sell large quantities of ivory through online platforms (Stiles, 2021). In 2022, 4341 kg of raw ivory of African origin was seized by Royal Malaysian Customs Department (RMCD) from Port Klang, Selangor of Malaysia most of which were destined for other southeast Asian countries (Report of DWNP, Peninsular Malaysia, 2023). Cases of ivory seizures also reported from India and Bangladesh in south Asia.

130. ***Illegal killing –*** Illegal killing of elephants of Asian elephants have been reported from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, India, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka (reports of the FD of the countries to IUCN SSC AsESG, 2023). Though reports from other countries have not received, illegal killing of elephants in other Asian elephant range countries is known to persist. Between 2021-23, eight elephants in Bangladesh were illegally killed by electrocution or gunshot. However, this was not related to trade in ivory but due to HEC. In Bhutan, five cases of illegal hunting were reported between 2020-23 due to electrocution and hunting and in three cases the tusks were missing from the carcass. In Cambodia, snares are used but the cases were related to HEC and not poaching. In India, elephants are illegally killed due to electrocution, poisoning and poaching. In Malaysia, seven cases of illegally killing of elephants were reported between 2021-23 (by poisoning and gunshot) but none of the cases were related to poaching. In Myanmar, two cases of poaching for ivory were reported from Ayeyarwady in 2022 (Myanmar FD, 2023). In Nepal, three cases of electrocution of elephants were reported between 2020-23, due to HEC. In Sri Lanka, 23 cases of illegal killing by explosives, poisoning, electrocution, gunshot were reported by the Department, all as a response to the intensifying HEC in the country.

131. ***Online ivory trade –*** In Indonesia, though Facebook and Instagram accounts were used for online trade in ivory items (mostly for jewellery) the trend has decreased significantly since 2016 (TRAFFIC 2020). Nusa Tenggara provinces, which have never been associated with the ivory trade, were found to be among the most important online ivory hotspots in the country.

132. In Peninsular Malaysia, seven cases of online trading of ivory (Kris handle made of ivory) has been reported between 2020-23 (Govt. of Peninsular Malaysia, 2023). Online promoting of illegal wildlife trade has been included as wildlife offences under the gazettement of the Wildlife Conservation (Amendment) Act 2022 on the 10th of February 2022. Malaysian Govt. is conducting investigation and profiling on the suspected group of people who are actively promoting illegal wildlife through online platform. The Govt. is obtaining assistance from social media and online business platform for instance Facebook, Lazada, Shoppe etc. to understand the procedure in deactivating or removal of the suspected individual profile or illegal wildlife selling group.

133. In Viet Nam, a few traditional crafts villages around Hanoi are still reported to sell ivory online (by Facebook, Valo) and sending the ivory to customers by post or courier (Stiles, 2021).

134. ***Trade in other body parts –*** Mong La in Myanmar has recently emerged as a significant hub in ivory trade as well as is a market place for elephant parts and products including elephant skin, teeth, bones, hair and other parts and derivatives such as meat or genitalia (MECAP, 2018).

135. ***Live elephant trade –*** Trade in live elephants occurs in Nepal, Myanmar, India, Sri Lanka, Thailand. Nepal, is primarily a destination for live elephant trade where commercial trade of elephants is not allowed but they can be gifted. Captive elephants from India are known to be transported (walked or by truck) into Nepal (particularly Sauraha area in Chitwan National Park) for tourism purposes (Szydlowski, 2022).

136. In Myanmar, illegal capture for cross border trade to supply circuses or tourist camps, or as working elephants (e.g. in the logging industry or as transport animals) has been known to be a problem for a long time (Shepherd 2002), and research suggests that the trade continues (MECAP, 2018).

137. Sri Lanka has been a destination for elephants imported legally from India and Myanmar for temples in Sri Lanka. Illegal live wild elephant trade is known to occur and most seizures have been reported from Colombo and kept at the Pinnawala Elephant Orphanage or Elephant Transit Home, Udawalawe (Prakash *et al.*2020). The illegal capture of wild elephants has been recorded to be sourced from wildlife protected areas and state forests including Ruhuna (Yala) National Park, Udawalawe National Park, and Katagamuwa Sanctuary and state forests in Managed Elephant Range – Hambantota, Galgamuwa, Maho, and Weeravila (Prakash *et al.,* 2020). Smugglers sedate the maternal elephants using tranquilizing guns and injecting tranquilizers into the young elephants. Automatic weapons are also used to kill protective members of the herds.

138. Young elephants are prized higher than adults in Myanmar and Thailand (Nijman 2014). Thailand is known to be the main destination for illegally sourced elephants from Myanmar, and since their diminished use within the logging industry in many countries, the main reason for the trade is now increasingly tourism (Hankinson *et al.,* 2020).

139. There is no tradition of trophy hunting in China, Viet Nam. Any seizures for hunted tusks, trophies were from imports from Africa brought in for commercial purposes (Stiles, 2021).

AsESG members meeting

140. The 11th meeting of the Asian Elephant Specialist Group (AsESG) was held in New Delhi and Corbett in India from 14th to 17th march 2023 that was attended by Government officials from 11 Asian elephant range countries apart from AsESG members are other experts. Wide range of issues including standards and guidelines for the management and welfare of elephants in wild and in captivity, wildlife emergencies, national action plans, red-listing of Asian elephants and challenges for the conservation of elephants in Sabah, Malaysia were discussed.

141. AsESG during last few years has been working to develop protocols in the form of guidelines and manuals to guide the management of specific matters confronting elephant conservation in an effective and scientific manner. AsESG is currently working on nine working groups to develop outcome documents for long term conservation of Asian elephants.

142. At CITES CoP19, AsESG also conducted a side event on “Kathmandu Declaration and its implication for conservation of Asian elephants” on 16th November, 2022 at Panama Convention Centre,

Panama City. About 100 people participated at the side event with officials from India, Nepal, Malaysia, IUCN SSC, African Elephant Specialist Group and CITES Secretariat speaking at the event.

Elephant conservation action plans

143. Reiterating the need to have National Elephant Conservation Action Plans (NECAP) for all the 13 range States, the AsESG offered to assist countries to develop these action plans. As an outcome and since the last reporting, AsESG has recently in March 2023 released the first edition of the "Action Elephant", a compendium of the updated National Elephant Conservation Action Plans. The first edition of "Action elephant" comprises of six National Elephant Conservation Action Plans. This includes the updated National Elephant Conservation Action Plans of Bangladesh (2018), Bhutan (2018), Cambodia (2020), Lao PDR (2022), Myanmar (2018) and Sabah Malaysia (2020). AsESG is also working with Ministries of Peninsular Malaysia and Viet Nam in the preparation of their NECAP. Nepal has prepared its draft plan and which is being reviewed.

Annex 1: Asian Elephants Status, Threats and Conservation actions Country-wise elephant trade scenario

Bangladesh:

144. ***Population:*** The Asian elephant in Bangladesh is now reduced to a small population of 289-437 individuals (IUCN ASESG Report 2020) of which around 210-330 are resident and 79-107 have trans-boundary ranges (Ministry of Environment and Forests, 2018).

145. ***Distribution:*** The present day elephant population in Bangladesh is highly fragmented and the elephants are mostly confined to evergreen forests of Chittagong, Chittagong Hill tracts and Cox Bazar (Ministry of Environment and Forests, 2018). It is estimated that up to 30% of Bangladesh's elephant population are transboundary migrating over the borders from and to neighboring India and Myanmar (Ministry of Environment and Forests, 2018). Trans-boundary movement occurs in the central-north and south-east of Bangladesh. In the central-north, elephants in Kurigram, Sherpur, Netrokona, Jamalpur and Maulvi Bazar districts, have transboundary ranges overlapping the Indian states of Meghalaya and Assam (IUCN 2004; Islam 2006, Islam *et al.* 2011, Ministry of Environment and Forests, 2018). In the south-east, some herds in the Chitagong Hill Tracts move to and from Mizoram state of India and some in the Teknaf area in Cox's Bazar move to and from Arakan of Myanmar (Islam *et al.* 2011; Ministry of Environment and Forests, 2018).

146. ***Legislation:*** The Asian elephant is listed in the Third schedule of the Bangladesh Wildlife Conservation (Amendment) Act (1974) providing full protection from hunting, killing and capturing. According to the Wildlife (Conservation and Security) Act, 2012, the penalty for killing an elephant will be imprisonment for 2 - 7 years and also with a fine of Tk 100,000- 1,000,000 (US$ 920-9,200), and for a repetition, imprisonment not exceeding 12 years and a fine upto Tk 1,500,000 (US$ 13,800). In addition, in case of unlawful collection, carriage and trades of elephant body parts and productswill induce a sentencing a maximum three years of imprisonment and up to three lakh taka of a monetary fine.

147. ***Trade:*** In Bangladesh, direct killing of elephants takes place, usually either by the killing of stray elephants, mostly during the human-elephant conflict (HEC) situations, or by the illegal poaching for body parts or meat consumption.

148. Demand for elephant meat and tusks in the south-east also pose a serious threat to elephants (Islam *et al.,* 2011). The international demand for the elephant tusks and other body parts is now recognized, but little is known about the status and trends of elephant poaching and relevant trades in Bangladesh (Barua, 2014). However, illegal trades of elephant body parts are not the only reason for elephant poaching. A study stated that a tribal community called 'Pankhu' hunts wild elephants for meat in CHT south forest division (IUCN Bangladesh, 2004).

149. Though there is no ivory market in Bangladesh and no online trade in ivory has been detected so far, three cases of ivory confiscation have been reported by the Bangladesh Govt. between 2021-23 (Report of Bangladesh FD, 2023). In 2021 and in 2022, the ivory seizures (4.2 kg in 2021 confiscation and 2.7kg in 2022 confiscation) were made in Chandgaon in Chattogram from the shopping bag of the culprit while in transit in a bus. In May this year, four pieces of ivory (10.5 kg in total) was confiscated from Panchlaish Model Thana in Chattogram hidden in bags under the bed of an apartment.

150. Though eight cases of illegal killing of elephants have been reported between 2021-23 (Report of Bangladesh FD, 2023), none of them seems to be for poaching for ivory. Of the eight elephant deaths, six were found to be electrocuted and two were killed by gunshots. In all the five dead male elephants, ivory was found to be present in the carcass.

151. ***Conservation actions taken:*** Bangladesh ratified to CITES on 20 November 1981 and entered into force on 18 February 1982 (www.cites.org). Bangladesh joined the MIKE in 2003 and declared the Chunati Wildlife Sanctuary as a MIKE site in 2003. Bangladesh Govt. has developed a Wildlife Crime Control Unit (WCCU) in 2012 to stop and control illegal wildlife trade and related wildlife crime. WCCU has a 24- hour hotline for reporting of illegal wildlife trafficking and coordinates with other agencies including Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), Border Coast Guard, Customs, Police and Ministry of Foreign Affairs to tackle wildlife crime in Bangladesh. WCCU also collaborates with TRAFFIC, UNDOC, INTERPOL and ICCWC internationally to build synergies and to develop tools for more effective enforcement of wildlife trade.

Bhutan:

152. ***Population:*** The existing population in Bhutan is estimated to around 678 individuals and is restricted to areas bordering India mainly in protected areas; however seasonal cross-border movements to India have been restricted as a result of habitat deterioration in both countries.

153. ***Distribution:*** The elephant distribution covers foothills along the Southern border in the districts of Samdrupjongkhar, Sarpang, Tsirang, Samtse and Gedu (Jigme and Williams, 2011).

154. ***Legislation:*** Forest and Nature Conservation Act of Bhutan 1995 accords highest protection status to the elephant by listing it under Schedule I species and the current legislations imposes fines ranging from Nu. 15,000.00 for offense committed against elephant to Nu. 100,000.00 as compensation for missing tusks of an elephant (RGoB, 2017).

155. ***Trade:*** Elephant poaching in Bhutan is insignificant. Yet, owing to porous international border and existence of illegal trade of elephant parts and products in the region, poaching remains as a constant threat to its conservation. Use of ivory for making Bhutanese traditional items like cups, prayer beads, jewellery, etc., indicates that there is demand for elephant ivory in the country and this would remain as a prime driver for elephant poaching (NCD, 2019). There have been no incidents of trade in live elephants in Bhutan and the country is not thought to be a source, transit, or destination for live elephant trade. However, the southern part of Bhutan including the Royal Manas National Park could be the hotspot for illegal ivory trade. Incidentally, no case of illegal ivory seizures by the people across the border have been recorded between 2021-2023 (Report of Bhutan FD, 2023). However, six cases of illegal killing of elephants have been recorded between 2020-23 of which four were adult males. Two adult males were hunted in Royal Manas National Park and the ivory from the carcass were missing. In 2020, one male was found electrocuted in Dagana Forest Division with its ivory missing and the ivory of an adult male found in Pemagatshel Forest Division for reasons unknown was handed over to the Forest Department. Three cases of poaching were reported between 2020-23 reported from Royal Manas National Park (1 on 2021-22) and Bathligurung and Goverkunda, Manas (2 in 2022-23).

156. ***Conservation actions taken:*** Bhutan joined CITES in 2002 (www.cites.org). SMART Patrolling are put in place to curb the illegal activities in all the 24 field offices under the department. Border patrolling is done to check any poaching and other wildlife related offences. There is strong enforcement on wildlife protection rules and regulations. Bhutan has a good collaboration with Indian Govt and the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau. Bhutan also has partnered with NOGOs in India particularly Wildlife Trust of India to train its frontline staff against trade and poaching. The collaboration of Bhutan with IUCN SSC AsESG in developing its long pending National Elephant Conservation Action Plan (2018-28) has laid down the log frame to prevent poaching and illegal trade of elephant and its body parts.

Cambodia:

157. ***Population:*** Previous estimates of the elephant population of Cambodia ranged from 2000 (Kemf & Jackson 1995), to 500 to 1000 (Osborn & Vinton 1999) is now estimated to be around 400-600 (Maltby and Bourchier, 2011; Menon and Tiwari, 2019).

158. ***Distribution:*** The two largest elephant populations are located in two Protected Area network complexes (1) Eastern Plains Landscape situated in eastern Cambodia and the Cardamom Mountains Landscape located in southwestern Cambodia (Maltby and Bourchier, 2011; GDANCP, 2020). Each of the landscape are estimated to cover an area of more than a million hectares (GDANCP, 2020) and are primarily comprised] National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries, with the wider Cardamon Landscape also including a a PA recognised as a multiple-use area and multiple-use area. Small fragmentated population also occur in a range of protected areas located in central and northern areas in the country (Maltby and Bourchier, 2011; GDANCP, 2020). While data is limited, it is believed that small trans-boundary populations occur inside and outside protected areas, these include the following areas (1) the northern border with Lao PDR in Preah Vihear and Ratanakiri provinces, (2) eastern Thailand and western Cambodia most likely Battambang and Palin provinces and possibly though unconfirmed in Pursat province (3) western Vietnam and eastern Cambodia, predominately Mondulkiri province and possibly a small section of the southern Ratanakiri province in Thailand.

159. ***Legislation:*** The trade in ivory of Asian elephants has been prohibited in Cambodia since 1994 and the country ratified in CITES in 1997. Wild and captive elephants are protected under Cambodian domestic legislation. Illegal trade of elephant parts can result in imprisonment of between 5-10 years, with the term

doubled for multiple violations. However, the Cambodian legislation does not cover wildlife originating from outside the country. This means that domestic trade in African ivory is not yet prohibited under Cambodian law (TRAFFIC Bulletin, 2017). A current wide-ranging review of Cambodian's environmental legislation is currently being worked on by the Cambodian Government.

160. ***Trade:*** Poaching over the last 30 years has decimated the elephant population in Cambodia. However, the levels of hunting have abated significantly over the last 10 years. As reported by Cambodian Govt., there has not been a reported incident of poaching in the last 3 years. However, elephant mortalities could be underreported because law enforcement and community patrol teams are limited in numbers while hunting occurs over vast forested areas. Anecdotal reports suggest some of the deaths could have resulted from the continued demand for elephant parts. Trade of elephant parts may also be opportunistic if a carcass is found or an elephant killed in retaliation for crop-raiding.

161. The trophy tusk imports and ivory market in Cambodia is relatively small (Stiles, 2021). The recent domestic ivory market bans in China and Vietnam could have caused the entire market to go underground (Stiles, 2021). Most sales on worked ivory, however, are still done in shops, market stalls or person-to-person where law enforcement is weak. Based on the volume of the trade, the size of ivory items, and the recently very low levels of elephant poaching in Cambodia, it is likely that much of the ivory originates from elsewhere, probably Africa. The Cambodian Govt. recently has reported that there were two instances of ivory seizures in 2016 and 2018 in Phnom Penh port where 4641 kg of ivory were being shipped. No illegal or online markets in Cambodia is recorded to exist. But, consumer groups in Cambodia are willing to pay high process for ivory items as some may be unaware of poaching of elephants and illegal trade in ivory (WildAid, 2014).

162. In addition to improved roads throughout the country and along international borders, there has been an increase in small roads throughout protected areas, thus increasing accessibility and facilitating poaching within key elephant habitats. Market ivory surveys in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap suggest that there is a demand for ivory from Chinese, Vietnamese and Cambodian buyers, amongst others (GDANCP, 2020). There is some indication that this demand is increasing, and there is a risk that international buyers may enter Cambodia to purchase ivory for re-sale in their countries of origin (GDANCP, 2020). This may increase demand for imports of ivory and other elephant parts to Cambodia, and potentially lead to poaching of local elephant to meet such demand.

163. ***Conservation actions taken:*** Cambodia Government has been working with several international NGOs and neighbouring countries to combat illegal wildlife crimes. Management strategies to reduce wildlife crimes inside protected area boundaries include regular patrolling by government ranges to remove snares, prevent illegal hunting and other illegal activities. Community awareness programmes are being organised involving various stakeholders.

China:

164. ***Population:*** Around 300 elephants live in Yunnan province in Southwest China, bordering Lao PDR, Myanmar and Vietnam.

165. ***Distribution:*** Elephants in China are scattered in human-dominated landscapes across Xishuangbanna, Lincang, and Pu'er prefectures of Southern Yunnan, in southwest China (Chen ***et al.***, 2021).

166. ***Legislation:*** Since 1988, the Asian elephant is designated as Class I protected animal in China's Wildlife Protection Law. However, there have been many changes in wildlife protection and illegal wildlife trade since 1988. A new version of the Wildlife Protection Law of the People's Republic of China came into force in 2023.

167. The new regulation prohibits publishing of any advertisements for selling, purchasing or using wildlife and its products or the restricted hunting tools. It prohibits any trading sites including the online trade platform and commodity trading market provide services for illegal selling, purchasing or using of wildlife and its product.

168. The new law strengthened the legal responsibility both for the criminals and for the management and law enforcement officers. For criminals, "Relevant information in illegal activities of wildlife will be recorded in personal social integrity file and made public." For officers, "who do not investigate or publish the name of criminals upon discovering or receiving the report in illegal trade of wildlife or abuse, shall be given demerits, demotion, or dismissal and their supervisors shall resign".

169. The new law also strengthens international and domestic cooperation in combating illegal trade of wildlife. The law requests the relevant authorities "to organize and carry out international cooperation and

communication on wildlife protection and relevant law enforcement operation," and "to establish an inter-agency coordination mechanism to prevent and combat the smuggling and illegal trade of wildlife and its products, and to conduct operations to prevent and combat wildlife crime."

170. ***Trade:*** China was recognized as one of the main destinations for illegally sourced ivory (Gao and Clark, 2014; Stephens and Southerland, 2018). However, the Chinese government enacted bans on imports and exports of ivory in 2015 and on the domestic ivory trade in 2017 (Gamso, 2019).

171. No information has been received from the Government of China on the recent trade and poaching cases in China. Literature survey indicates that China's land borders are approximately 13,600 miles long, limiting the Chinese government's ability to police them. The Burmese border town of Mong La vendors have established a wildlife trading hub from which products like ivory and elephant skin can be transported into China (Stephens and Southerland, 2018). Smugglers also use private border crossings with weaker security, further complicating enforcement efforts.

172. There is no tradition of trophy hunting in China. Any seizures for hunted tusks, trophies were from imports from Africa brought in for commercial purposes (Stiles, 2021). Post ban in 2017, large quantity of ivory (48,217 kg) were seized in 2019 in China including Hong Kong indicating authorities taking illegal ivory trade seriously (Stiles, 2021). As China and Vietnam have been highlighted in ETIS reports as countries 'greatly affected by ivory trade', CITES has imposed on them the responsibility of preparing the National Ivory Action Plans aimed at halting illegal ivory trade (Stiles 2021).

173. The recent domestic ivory market bans in China and Vietnam have caused the entire market to go underground (Stiles, 2021). Most sales, however, are still done in shops, market stalls or person-to-person. In addition to domestic markets, up to 50% of Chinese purchase their ivory outside China while travelling, 67 which has increased illicit ivory market activity considerably in countries where law enforcement is weak (such as Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia) to meet Chinese demand (Stiles, 2021).

174. The recent rises in the ivory wholesale price in Vietnam and China suggest either that stockpile sales are decreasing, thereby constricting supply, or that the sourcing shift from East and southern Africa to West and central Africa is the cause.

175. A 2017 GlobeScan survey of top Chinese ivory markets indicated about 31% of urban consumers are "borderline" purchasers and about 19% of urban consumers are "die-hard" consumers and their intention to purchase ivory fell from 43 to 18%. Though the price has declined and it is now illegal to openly purchase ivory in China, Chinese tourists to Japan, Vietnam, Laos, and Burma can still purchase ivory (Stephens and Southerland, 2018).

176. The most recent GlobeScan-WWF ivory consumer survey in China reported that 12% of participants surveyed had purchased ivory in 2020, down from 31% in 2017, before the domestic legal market closure (Meijer *et al.,*2021). Though this rate of consumption is still high, but the downward trend in consumption is till encouraging.

177. ***Conservation actions taken:*** China has been a party to the CITES since 1981 and has a legal framework in place to regulate international trade in wildlife (Stephens and Southerland, 2018).

India:

178. ***Population:*** India holds by far the largest number of wild Asian elephants, estimated at about 29,964 or nearly 60% of the global population of the species (data from Project Elephant Directorate in 2017).

179. ***Distribution:*** Wild elephants are presently confined to four different regions: (i) the foothills of Himalayas in the north (ii) the north-eastern states (iii) the forests of east central India, and (iv) the forested hilly tracts of Western and Eastern Ghats in southern India. A small population of feral elephants exists in the Andaman Islands.

180. ***Legislation:*** The primary wildlife legislation in India is the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972 where elephants are considered a Schedule I species, conferring it the highest level of protection. As elephants are a Schedule I animal, the penalties for either illegal trade in live elephants or in elephant ivory/parts are the same: a fine and 3 years of prison for the first offense, thereafter up to 7 years in prison. Additionally, private owners can have their ownership certificate revoked and their elephant(s) confiscated for illegally trading live elephants.

181. ***Trade:*** In India, trading in elephant tusks is prohibited under Schedule I of Wild Life Protection Act, 1972. The international and domestic trade in both raw and worked mammoth ivory items is banned in India, following the CITES elephant ivory ban, because of the look-alike appearance of mammoth and elephant ivory (Vigne and Martin, 2017). However, poaching of elephants for ivory and live trade in elephants are known to occur sporadically. A total of 23 elephants are reported to have been poached between 2019-21 in India from the states of Jharkhand, Kerala, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Odisha, Tamil Nadu (PE Directorate, 2022). A total of 15 ivory seizures was reported between 2021-22 (Odisha, Kerala, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, West Bengal), all being transported through land route (PE Directorate, 2022). Though no ivory seizures were made in Nagaland, Forest Department has informed of elephant meat being consumed by locals and in one instance a local was held for illegally carrying elephant meat weighing 33.5kg (Nagaland FD).

182. The trade in captive wild elephants extends beyond the borders of Myanmar to India. There is also a demand for live elephants in Kerala wherein full-grown tuskers have been bought from Assam for temples. While there are laws in place to prohibit such action in India, the trade in Asian elephants transported from Assam continues unabated (Panda, 2014).

183. Directorate of Revenue intelligence (DRI) plays a pivotal role in tackling environmental crimes across international borders. Two significant seizures by DRI in 2021-22 involved seizure of 27.85 kgs of elephant tusk/ivory (2021-2022 Report, 2022). In August 2021, the officers of DRI intercepted two passengers at Howrah Railway Station, Kolkata (West Bengal) and seized 59 cylindrical pieces of tusks of Indian elephant in assorted sizes, totally weighing 14.90 kg from their luggage (2021-2022 Report, 2022).

184. India has always been at the forefront in banning the domestic trade in ivory in 1986. Incidentally, India's decision to abstain against the proposal to re-open the international trade in ivory at the CoP 19 of CITES at Panama in 2022 was unaccounted for. However, the proposal, to allow a regular form of controlled trade in ivory from Namibia, Botswana, South Africa, and Zimbabwe was defeated at the CoP.

185. ***Conservation actions taken:*** Govt. of India is also working towards trans-boundary elephant conservation with neighbouring range countries. India formally joined the South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network (SAWEN) in 2016 to fight against poaching of wildlife in the entire region. The Govt. of India has also constituted an intelligence and enforcement agency, the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) in 2007 which is actively working to deter organised wildlife crime and improve enforcement standards in the country.

Indonesia:

186. ***Population:*** Indonesia has two subspecies of the Asian elephant, the Sumatran elephant (*Elephas maximus sumatranus*) and the Borneo elephant (*Elephas maximus borneensis*) (Azmi and Gunaryadi, 2011). The elephant population in Indonesia is estimated to be 928-1379 (11th AsESG meeting, 2023).

187. ***Distribution:*** Sumatran elephant habitat covers all forests on the island of Sumatra from Lampung Province to, ranging from Wet Forests and Brackish Forests near the coast to Mountain Forests (Abdullah *et al.,* 2021). The spread of Bornean elephants is in the northern region of Borneo, namely Sabah (eastern part of Malaysia) and North Kalimantan (part of Indonesia) (Sukmantoro *et al.*, 2021).

188. ***Legislation:*** Indonesia has issued a new list of protected species in 2018 (The Ministry decree NOMOR P.106/MENLHK/SETJEN/ KUM.1/12/2018) and currently lists the Asian Elephant (*Elephas maximus*) as protected. However, there still remains no listed protection for elephant species deriving from outside of the country, still leaving a loophole for trade of non-Asian Elephant species in the country (Indraswari *et al.*, 2020).

189. Act No. 11 of 2008 on Information and Electronic Transactions provides Indonesia's legal framework for governing online activities including trade transactions. Indonesia additionally has Act No. 7 of 2014, which stipulates certain procedures for all forms of business and trade, including online trade. Neither of these laws explicitly prohibit the sale of ivory or any other wildlife products. However, they do state that it is prohibited to sell any items that are illegal under the Indonesian Law, despite not referencing any law in particular. Violation of the law carries a variety of sanctions, ranging from revocation of business licences to prison sentences of up to four years and fines of up to IDR12 billion (USD883,000) (Indraswari *et al.*, 2020).

190. ***Trade:*** No information on ivory trade in Indonesia has been received from the Indonesian Govt. Literature reports suggest that Indonesia has modest involvement in the illegal ivory trade, playing no major role either as a transit or a destination country (ETIS Report, 2019). Typical ivory seizures within Indonesia involve

swagger sticks, carvings, trophy tusks, jewellery and cigarette holders, with the latter being a particularly popular item among Indonesian customers (Indraswari *et al.*, 2020).

191. Indonesia is also not a source, transit, or destination for illegal trade in live Asian elephants.

192. A study conducted by TRAFFIC in 2020 reports that Facebook and Instagram accounts are used for online trade in ivory items (which were mostly for jewellery). However, the trend has decreased in 2019 to a total case of 46 from 67 encountered in 2016. During the survey, a total of 402 items were found for sale in 168 posts across Indonesia (Indraswari *et al.*, 2020). In 2019, Nusa Tenggara provinces, which have never been associated with the ivory trade, were found to be among the most important online ivory hotspots in the country. In spite of this, Indonesia has generally been considered to play a minor role in the ivory trade.

193. ***Conservation actions taken:*** Indonesia has been a signatory to CITES since 1978.

Lao PDR:

194. ***Population:*** Current wild elephant population is estimated to be about 300-400 (11th AsESG meeting 2023).

195. ***Distribution:*** Currently the elephants are found within and outside of forest, covering 14 provinces of Lao PDR.

196. ***Legislation:*** Under the Lao National Wildlife and Aquatic Law (2007), it is considered a criminal offense to remove, kill or trade in wild Asian elephants. A Restricted Species Category 1, offenders can be punished for three months to five years of imprisonment, depending on the offence. The law does not specifically mention on ivory trade sourced from international locations. The National Ivory Action Plan of Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (June, 2020) builds on the Wildlife and Aquatic law and is more in line with the CITES Convention. A new decree to implement CITES has been issued in 2023.

197. ***Trade:*** While poaching of elephants for ivory does occur sporadically in Laos, it is the transit of ivory through Laos that is of greater concern. Sale of ivory products through open display in shops appears to have reduced in the recent years. A total of 133 elephants have been reported to be killed between 1985 to 2020 by illegal hunting (for their ivory and other body parts for commercial purposes and consumption) and as retaliatory killing due to HEC (NEAP, 2022).

198. Laos is not a destination point for smuggling of ivory, but has been identified as a gateway to larger international markets (NIAP, 2015). Shipments are commonly sent through international airports. Few years before, smuggling of African ivory into Lao PDR was reported to occur on a large scale (NIAP, 2015). This needs to be investigated now.

199. Ivory trade in Lao PDR has increased due to weak law enforcement and lack of control on the illegal international ivory trade (Stiles, 2021). Though there are domestic laws against ivory trade, the domestic ivory trade prohibitions are not clear, nor are penalties well publicized. Though Lao Government has reported no death of elephants in two of its MIKE sites for the last 3 years, anecdotal reports indicate that there has been death of about 10-11 elephants in the Nam Pui National Park between February-July 2023 due to poaching and HEC.

200. The ETIS report in CoP 18 (2019) indicated that Lao PDR is an important transit and destination country for ivory trade. The ETIS report in CoP 19 (2022) stated that Lao PDR did not report any case of ivory seizure. However, report of seizures were reported by other parties and obtained from media sources (including a case of seizure of a pair of tusks being sold on Facebook in 2021 and its subsequent prosecution and conviction in a court of law).

201. Most worked ivory for sale in Laos originates from elephants poached in Africa (Vigne and Martin, 2017). Ivory has also been entering Laos illegally from Thailand. Ivory items for sale in Laos are processed in the neighbouring countries and smuggled into Laos for sale (Vigne and Martin, 2017). Ivory carving in Lao PDR is insignificant. The most common ivory items for sale were pendants, followed by necklaces, bangles, beaded bracelets and other jewellery. Many people from China, South Korea and other Asian countries buy ivory items in Laos (Vigne and Martin, 2017).

202. ***Conservation actions taken:*** Lao PDR ratified the CITES in 2004. The Government has designated Nakai-Nam Theun National Park and Nam Pui as MIKE sites.

203. The Govt. of Lao PDR cooperates at regional and international level, particularly with countries bordering Lao PDR and international organisations, MIKE, CITES and IUCN SSC AsESG.

204. Lao PDR has drafted its 10 year National Elephant Action Plan in 2022 outlining the programmes and budgetary requirement to combat illegal elephant killing and elephant product trading.

Malaysia:

205. ***Population:*** Peninsular Malaysia has 1223-1677 wild elephants and 1000-1500 wild elephants are present in Sabah Malaysia (11th AsESG meeting, 2023).

206. ***Distribution:*** Currently, elephants occur in seven of the 11 states of Peninsular Malaysia (Saaban, *et al.*, 2011; NEAP, 2013). Elephants in Sabah Malaysia occur within three managed elephant ranges (MERs) - Lower Kinabatangan, Tabin, and Central Sabah (AERSM, Kathmandu, Nepal, 2021).

207. ***Legislation:*** The main legal article for both live elephants and elephant ivory is the Wildlife Conservation Act 2010. Elephants are categorized as a Totally Protected Species of Act 716. A special permit (approved by the Minister) is required to keep any individual, part or derivative or in zoo, circus or exhibition operation. It is an offence for anyone to unlawfully shoot, kill, take or possess an elephant or part thereof. If found guilty, the penalty is a maximum fine of RM100,000, or 3 years imprisonment, or both. There are considered to be no gaps in the legislation.

208. ***Trade:*** The Govt. of Malaysia has reported a single instance of ivory seizure (in 2022) in the last 3 years. The raw ivory weighing 4341 kgs of African origin was seized by Royal Malaysian Customs Department in Port Klang, Selangor hidden in container behind sawn timber of a ship.

209. Seven cases of illegal killing of elephants were reported between 2021-22, five of which were due to poisoning, 1 death due to snare and one due to gunshot. However, none of the killings were due to poaching for ivory but could have been as a result of HEC. In 2020, however, a case of poaching was reported by the Govt. of Peninsular Malaysia in Gua Musang, Kelantan.

210. Seven cases of online trading of ivory (Kris handle made of ivory) has been reported between 2020-23 (Govt. of Peninsular Malaysia, 2023). Online promoting of illegal wildlife trade has been included as wildlife offences under the gazettement of the Wildlife Conservation (Amendment) Act 2022 on the 10th of February 2022. Malaysian Govt. is conducting investigation and profiling on the suspected group of people who are actively promoting illegal wildlife through online platform. The Govt. is obtaining assistance from social media and online business platform for instance Facebook, Lazada, Shoppe etc. to understand the procedure in deactivating or removal of the suspected individual profile or illegal wildlife selling group. Collaborating with Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) is the nodal agency that has authority over misconduct on the internet and social media.

211. In Sabah, an incidence of a poaching case was reported in 2021.

Conservation actions taken:

212. In Peninsular Malaysia the conservation actions taken are as below:

(i) Strengthening the protection of elephants to counter the illegal killing of elephants through the Biodiversity Protection & Patrolling Program (BP3).

(ii) National Elephant Conservation Action Plan (2013-2022) has 72 action plans under five pillars- i) habitat management, ii) enforcement, iii) conflict management, iv) best practices, and v) research. The plan is under revision and next plan is expected to be ready by end of 2023.

(iii) To date, Malaysia does not recognize or legalize any domestic ivory market in line with the approach of curbing the use of part or derivative of the elephant for commercial purposes. Following this, PERHILITAN has proactively set up the enforcement task force known as Wildlife Crime Unit (WCU) to tackle any possible wildlife crime at the states level, especially in the urban areas. In addition, a new bureau has been set up in July 2022 by the Royal Malaysia Police (RMP) to tackle the issue of wildlife crimes such as poaching and the trade of protected wildlife in the country. The Wildlife Crime Bureau (WCB), to operate under the Internal Security and Public Order Department will see teamwork between PERHILITAN and its east Malaysian counterparts.

(iv) **Inter States and Inter Enforcement Agencies Collaboration**

The Ministry of Natural Resources, Environment and Climate Change (NRECC) through Department of Wildlife and National Parks Peninsular Malaysia (PERHILITAN) has implemented the Biodiversity Protection and Patrolling Programme (BP3) which was officially started on 29 June 2020. The BP3 programme involves collaboration between PERHILITAN, RMP, Forestry Department of Peninsular Malaysia, Royal Malaysian Customs Department (RMCD) and other enforcement agencies to combat encroachment, illegal logging and wildlife hunting in identified hotspots within protected areas in Malaysia, including National Parks, Wildlife Reserves, State Parks, PFR, and RAMSAR Sites.

Two (2) major enforcement initiatives under BP3 that have shown significant impact on curbing illegal activities involving wildlife namely:

a) Operasi Bersepadu Khazanah (OBK) Programme

OBK is a national multi-agency task force on combating wildlife crime known whereby joint operation involving various enforcement and state parks authorities in collaboration with local NGOs conducted at targeted areas and successfully entered its fourth year of implementation starting on the 3rd September 2019, to combat issues on encroachment, illegal logging and illegal taking of produce in the national forests as well as wildlife hunting and other criminal offences under the Wildlife Conservation Act 2010 [*Act 716*] and other acts under the National Constitution. OBK was implemented by continuation of strong collaboration between the same enforcement agencies as before.

b) Community Ranger Programme

The Community Ranger is one of the components under BP3, which involves the appointment of Malaysian Armed Forces Veterans (VAT), PDRM Veterans (VPDRM), communities of indigenous people (OA), local communities and civilian retirees to deal with the issue of encroachment and illegal hunting/logging in the area of National Parks, Wildlife Reserves, State Parks, Permanent Forest Reserves (HSK) and RAMSAR Sites.

(v) **Regional and International Collaboration**

Regional and international level cooperations were among the efforts taken to strengthen enforcement and information exchange with INTERPOL since 2016 through Ops Dragon, Ops Chameleon, Ops Thunderstorm, Ops Thunderball dan Ops Thunder. Besides, the collaboration to strenghten implementation of wildlife enforcement has been carried out under the ASEAN Working Group on CITES and Wildlife Enforcement (AWG-CITES & WE), Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), United Nation Office on Drug and Crimes (UNODC), World Custom Organization (WCO) dan The Wildlife Trade Monitoring Network (TRAFFIC). It aims to eradicate wildlife crime by developing and mobilizing a network of co-operation between enforcement agencies internationally.

(vi) **Investigation under Anti-Money Laundering, Anti-Terrorism Financing and Proceeds of Unlawful Activities Act 2001 [*Act 613*]**

Enforcement authorities had widened its scope of investigation into financial aspect of wildlife crimes through Act 613.

213. In Sabah Malaysia the conservation actions taken are as below:

(i) A 10-year Action Plan on Combating Wildlife Crime is being developed to serve as a policy document to guide efforts to combat wildlife crime in Sabah.

(ii) A newly established rapid Response Team formed by SWD and Danau Girang Field Centre and funded by Sime Darby Foundation works to reduce poaching activities through regular patrols, which serves as a deterrence to poachers. This team will be based in Kinabatangan and Tabin, which are both elephant range areas.

(iii) Ongoing multiagency anti-poaching taskforce at the district level (Tawau, Lahad Datu and Sandakan). The task force facilitated by Sabah Wildlife Department (SWD) and WWF is a platform for law enforcement agencies (LEA) to share information and to coordinate joint patrols to combat wildlife crime, i.e; protected and endangered species including elephants, banteng, and pangolin. WWF's wildlife protection team has ongoing efforts to gather surveillance data from camera traps to identify hotspots of poachers/illegal activities, whereby this information has been channeled to the taskforce.

(iv) Statewide joint operation between LEAs for 2022 was conducted involving more than 300 LEA personnel and communities. A month-long integrated multi-agency crackdown under "Ops Bersepadu Khazanah" operation was held from June to July 2022, which resulted in seizures valued at RM10.6mil. The operation was focused on preventing, detecting and arresting poachers and other conducts of illegal activities involving Sabah's natural heritage. As for 2022 was conducted involving more than 300 LEA personnel and communities. A month-long integrated multi-agency crackdown under "Ops Bersepadu Khazanah" operation was held from June to July 2022, which resulted in seizures valued at RM10.6mil. The operation was focused on preventing, detecting and arresting poachers and other conducts of illegal activities involving Sabah's natural heritage.

(v) Ongoing bilateral engagement between Sabah and North Kalimantan local governments to secure a transboundary corridor and to combat the trafficking of ivory across the border with assistance from WWF.

(vi) Bornean Elephant Action Plan 2020-2029 developed with assistance of several NGOs.

Myanmar:

214. ***Population:*** Myanmar has been considered a stronghold for wild elephant populations and was long believed to have the second largest population after India (Songer *et al.,* 2016). Myanmar's wild elephant population has declined dramatically since the mid-1900s, and more recent assessments suggest that populations are still declining (Budd *et al.*, 2021). There are at present 1500-2000 wild elephants in Myanmar (11th AsESG meeting).

215. Distribution: As highlighted in the Myanmar Elephant Conservation Action plan of (2018-27), elephants in Myanmar are found in 5 regions- South East (Bilaktaung, Ayeyarwady /Tenasserim Elephant Range), Central (Bago Yoma Elephant Range), East (Shan Plateau Elephant Range), South west (Arakan Yoma Elephant Range) and North (Myitkyina/Upper Chindwin).

216. ***Legislation:*** In Myanmar the primary wildlife legislation is the Protection of Wildlife and Wild Plants and the Conservation of Natural Areas Law (1994) (revised in 2018). Under this law, elephants are categorized as completely protected wildlife. Penalties for offenses under this law are a jail sentence of up to 7 years, or a fine up to 50,000 MMK, or both (MECAP, 2018). The law is currently being revised; in the revision the fine will be increased to a minimum of 500,000 MMK to 1,500,000 MMK. This revision of the law is pending approval.

217. Most significant problem with Myanmar's legislation is that the tips of tusks, as well as tusks from government and privately-owned elephants that have died of natural causes are being sold. This 'loophole' provides a ready mechanism for illegal ivory to be sold under the guise of legally-acquired stocks and dealers take advantage of this and exploit the situation accordingly.

218. Current legislation in Myanmar enforces CITES regulations but there is a need for improvement. Myanmar does allow exchange of live elephants between zoos (in and out of the country) in exchange for other species. The law also allows establishing zoos/recreation Centres with live elephants in country, so that use is increasing. It was felt that some of the gaps in Myanmar legislation are that import of elephants is not covered in existing legislation, and captive and "domesticated" (captive born) elephants are not differentiated.

219. Trade: Myanmar Government has reported that no ivory has been seized between 2021-23. However, three cases of illegal killing of elephants were reported between 2021-23. In all three instances, the males aged between 20-35 years were poached for ivory. The poaching cases have been reported from Boat Pyin Township, Kawthaung District, Taninthayi Region and Thar Paung & Pathein Township, Pathein District, Ayeyarwady Region (Report of Govt. of Myanmar submitted to IUCN SSC AsESG, 2023).

220. Literature survey, however, indicates that illegal killing of wild elephants for their products is among the greatest threats to the future of Myanmar's elephant population (Sampson, *et al*., 2018. MECAP, 2018). Recent work on the hunting and local wildlife trade in Myanmar indicated that local amassing of illegal wildlife products, may be much higher than previously thought and contribute significantly to poaching pressures (Budd *et al.*, 2021). In addition to ivory, market surveys along the Myanmar-China border have shown an increasing demand for elephant skin, genitalia, and other body parts that are largely sourced from wild elephants in Myanmar (Nijman and Shepherd, 2014). A rise in demand for skin products in particular has resulted in increasing rates of illegal killing of elephants across Myanmar (Elephant Family 2019).

221. The ivory trade is long-established in Myanmar with ivory carving a multigenerational family business in some cases, especially in the traditional ivory carving Centre of Mandalay. Ivory is sourced in, as well as imported into, Myanmar, carved or processed, and then sold to local buyers or to foreigners (especially Chinese and Thai nationals) both through legal and illegal markets (MECAP, 2018). Mong La has recently emerged as a significant hub in ivory trade as well as is a marketplace for elephant parts and products including elephant skin, teeth, bones, hair and other parts and derivatives such as meat or genitalia (MECAP, 2018).

222. Illegal capture for cross border trade to supply circuses or tourist camps, or as working elephants (e.g. in the logging industry or as transport animals) has been known to be a problem for a long time (Shepherd 2002), and research suggests that the trade continues (MECAP, 2018).

223. China, Thailand and India border Myanmar and two new ports being planned in Myanmar could increase the use of Myanmar as a transit point for illegal wildlife trafficking. Construction of major new roads a worrying potential for the country to become an important transit country for illegal ivory to neighbouring countries (MECAP, 2018).

224. Policing and regulating wildlife trade in autonomous regions within Myanmar, especially along the border with China and the eastern border with Thailand, is a major challenge. Cross border security is a concern due to weak law and enforcement, limited budget, insufficient staff, limited technical capacity and limited cross sectoral and transboundary collaborations (MECAP, 2018).

225. ***Conservation actions taken:*** Myanmar has been a Party to CITES since 1997. Myanmar has already developed its 10-year National Elephant Conservation Action Plan (2018-2027) with detailed strategies to conserve its elephants. Myanmar has been combating wildlife crime through increased patrolling in reserved forests and protected areas. It has enhanced law enforcement at major check points along borders. Vigilance has been increased to control illegal wildlife trade markets. Regular public awareness programmes are conducted to promote awareness on illegal trade of timber and wildlife. Moreover, Myanmar is participating in CITES related trainings, workshops and meetings organized by ASEAN and partners to enhance the capacities of law enforcement officers.

Nepal:

226. ***Population***: Population of wild Asian elephant within Nepal has been estimated to be around 227 (Ram et al., 2022) and it is distributed thorough out the Chure Terai Madhesh Landscape (CTML) of Nepal except Rupandehi district, however it is concentrated to Protected Areas of the Terai (low land) region, in the central and eastern parts of the country, with relatively low numbers in the west (Sharma et al., 2020 & Ram et al., 2021).

227. ***Distribution:*** Nepal's elephant population has a collective geographic distribution of over a distance of 2000 km, represented by the eastern (Jhapa), central (Parsa - Chitwan), western (Bardia) and far western (Suklaphanta) populations.

228. ***Legislation:*** The primary wildlife legislation in Nepal is the National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act (1973). Penalties for offences of illegal trade in elephants under the legislation include fines of NPR 50,000 to 100,000 and/or 5 to 15 years jail or both.

229. The legislation only partially enforces CITES rules and a bill addressing CITES issues specifically is pending but has not yet passed through parliament in Nepal. The current legislation is adequate but as managing captive elephants is a traditional system in Nepal it has been difficult to regulate the movement of captive elephants and control the change of ownership rights.

230. ***Trade:*** In 2014, Nepal was the first country to achieve zero poaching of its three flagship species- tigers, rhinos and elephants. Whilst the elephant population in Nepal is relatively small, Nepal shares borders with India and China. It is illegal to sell ivory in Nepal, and traditional craftsmen have stopped carving ivory (Aryal *et al.*, 2018). There are fewer shops selling ivory illegally, and the number of ivory items on sale in Kathmandu dropped dramatically in last few years. In May, 2017, Nepal burnt a stockpile of > 4000 wildlife products, signaling its intolerance to wildlife trafficking (Dasgupta 2017). Illegal ivory is still occasionally smuggled into Nepal, but the ivory trade is no longer a major concern due to improved border controls and the establishment of bureaus dealing with wildlife crime (Aryal *et al.*, 2018).

231. However, Nepal is primarily a destination for live elephant trade where commercial trade of elephants is not allowed but they can be gifted. Captive elephants from India are known to be transported (walked or by truck) into Nepal (particularly Sauraha area in Chitwan National Park.) for tourism purposes (Szydlowski, 2022). Elephants are CITES appendix I animals, making this trade for commercial use illegal (CITES, 1973). However, the process is widely accepted and in many cases the elephants enter the country as gifts or with forged documents listing them as captive born (Szydlowski, 2022).

232. ***Conservation actions taken:*** Nepal became a party to CITES in 1975.

(i) Nepal's INTERPOL National Central Bureau (NCB) is established within the Nepal Police that helps Nepal to track poachers in other countries.

(ii) The Central Investigation Bureau (CIB) is a specialized investigation entity established within the Nepal Police which includes a unit dealing with wildlife crime.

(iii) To facilitate national inter-agency co-operation, the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) has been established, headed by the Director General of the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation and represented by enforcement agencies such as the Nepal Police, Nepal Customs and the National Intelligence Department.

(iv) MoUs with India and China have been adopted which address illegal wildlife trade. Though regular meetings are held between India and Nepal, dialogue between India and China is fairly less.

(v) The Statute of the SAWEN was ratified by Nepal in July 2016. The recent endorsement of the SAWEN Statute by five of the eight member countries is a significant development as it legitimized the network.

Sri Lanka:

233. ***Population:*** The current Sri Lankan population of free ranging elephants has been estimated at approximately 5879 (11th AsESG meeting, 2023).

234. ***Distribution:*** Elephants are found over almost the entire dry zone in an area approximately 60% of the country. In the south, elephants are seen in Udawalawe National Park, Yala, Lunugamvehera and Bundala also hold elephants. In the east, majority of elephants are outside national parks. Over 1000 elephants are seen in the north-central region, both inside (Minneriya and Kaudulla) and outside the protected areas. In the north-west region, there are over a thousand elephants largely outside protected areas. Little information is available on elephants in the northern areas. A small remnant population of about 15-20 elephants survive in the sub-montane Adams' Peak wilderness area in the central and South west region (Fernado *et al.*, 2011).

235. ***Legislation:*** The primary wildlife legislation in Sri Lanka is the Fauna and Flora Protection Ordinance (1991) and Bylaw 662/4. Additional elephant specific legislation includes the Registration and Licensing of Tuskers and Elephant Regulations (1991), and the Registration of Tusks and Tushes Regulations (1992 and amended in 2002) citing no provision for elephant trade in Sri Lanka.

236. Penalties for offences under the legislation include fines of 100,000-200,000 LKR and/or jail time of 10-20 years for illegal trade of live elephants. For illegal ivory trade the fine is 25,000 LKR and/or 2-5 years in jail. The Sri Lanka regulations for international elephant trade are stricter than those imposed by CITES and there seems to be no significant gaps in Sri Lanka legislation.

237. ***Trade:*** Sri Lanka has been a destination for elephants imported legally from India and Myanmar for temples in Sri Lanka. Illegal live wild elephant trade is known to occur and most seizures have been reported from Colombo and kept at the Pinnawala Elephant Orphanage or Elephant Transit Home, Udawalawe (Prakash

*et al.*2020). The illegal capture of wild elephants has been recorded to be sourced from wildlife protected areas and state forests including Ruhuna (Yala) National Park, Udawalawe National Park, and Katagamuwa Sanctuary and state forests in Managed Elephant Range – Hambantota, Galgamuwa, Maho, and Weeravila (Prakash *et al.*2020). The registration of wild-caught elephants falsely claiming as captive born in is very challenging in spite of the amendment Act No. 22 of the Fauna & Flora Protection Ordinance in 2009 to report the pregnancy of a captive female elephant to the Director General of the DWC ((Prakash *et al.*2020).

238. In Sri Lanka, smugglers sedate the maternal elephants using tranquilizing guns and injecting tranquilizers into the young elephants. Automatic weapons are also used to kill protective members of the herds. As live young elephants are prized higher than adults in Myanmar and Thailand (Nijman 2014), the same market trend can be anticipated in Sri Lanka.

239. ***Conservation actions taken:*** Department of Wildlife Conservation deploys field staff for regular patrol within Protected Areas and outside the Protected Areas. The Department of Custom practice screening mechanism at Air Port and Sea Port.

Thailand:

240. ***Population:*** In Thailand, population estimates for elephants range from 4013 to 4422 individuals (11^{tH} AsESG meeting, 2023).

241. ***Distribution:*** In Thailand, wild Asian elephants are spread across protected areas, mainly in the mountains along the border with Myanmar. Elephants are also found in smaller fragmented populations in the southern peninsula; several forest complexes on the border with Malaysia; to the east in a forest complex made up of the Khao Ang Runai Wildlife Sanctuary, Khao Soi Dao Wildlife Sanctuary, Khao Khitchakut National Park, and Khao Cha Mao National Park; and to the northeast at the Dong Phaya Yen-Khao Yai Forest Complex, which includes Khao Yai National Park, and the Western Isaan Complex (Htet, *et al*., 2021).

242. ***Legislation:*** There are a total of six different acts of legislation covering offences related to elephants in Thailand.

    (i) Draught Animals Act for trade in live elephants

    (ii) Animal Epidemics Act for live elephants and their carcasses

    (iii) Wild Animal Reservation and Protection Act (concerns with live African elephant and wild Asian elephant and their carcasses)

    (iv) Elephant Ivory Act for ivory and ivory products originated from domesticated elephants of the Draught Animals Act

    (v) Customs Act for international trade of live African elephant and Asian elephant and their carcasses

    (vi) Import and Export of Goods Act for export of Asian elephant and their carcasses

243. ***Trade:*** No information on trade has been received from the country. However, Thailand is known to be the main destination for illegally sourced elephants from Myanmar, and since their diminished use within the logging industry in many countries, the main reason for the trade is now increasingly tourism (Hankinson *et al.,* 2020).

244. ***Conservation actions taken:*** No reports yet from the members from Thailand.

Viet Nam:

245. ***Population:*** In Viet Nam, population estimates for elephants range from 104-134 individuals (11^{tH} AsESG meeting, 2023).

246. ***Distribution:*** Currently the areas with small populations of elephants lie in remote areas of the Northern and Southern parts of Central Vietnam, along the Lao–Vietnamese border, the Central Highlands along the border with Cambodia, and the Eastern part of South Viet Nam.

247. ***Legislation:*** In Viet Nam, new laws – the Penal Code No. 100/2015/QH13, along with Law No. 12/2017/QH14 – have come into force on 1st January 2018. These laws are more robust and provide more effective punitive measures in the fight against wildlife crime, with penalties for criminal offences now increased to fines of maximum of VND2 billion (USD88,438.20) and imprisonment of up to 15 years. Whilst these new laws are an improvement to previous legislation, they will need to be strictly implemented and enforced if they are to serve as an effective deterrent to wildlife crimes.

248. ***Trade:*** No information on trade has been received members from Viet Nam.

249. ***Conservation actions taken:*** No reports yet from the members from Viet Nam.

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The African Elephant Fund (AEF)

250. This section has been prepared and submitted by Chad as the Chair of the African Elephant Fund Steering Committee (AEFSC) in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) as the host of the Fund, and the AEF Secretariat. This report is an update by the AEFSC on the implementation of the African Elephant Action Plan (AEAP) and the operations of AEF. It covers the period between November 2021 and June 2023.

Meetings of the AEFSC

251. Within the reporting period, the AEFSC has held four informal meetings and two formal meetings. The 8th Virtual AEFSC meeting took place on 25 October 2022. During this meeting, the AEFSC evaluated and approved four proposals with a total budget of USD 456,375 which had been received during the ninth call for proposals in 2020. The evaluation of the proposals had been put on hold earlier in order to prioritize the emergency call for proposals to provide funding to the range States to address elephant conservation challenges related to or impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. A majority of these Covid-19 projects were implemented and completed over the course of 2021 and 2022.

252. During the meeting, the AEFSC also discussed the progress of the review of the AEAP, the AEF's participation at the CITES CoP19 meeting held on 14 – 15 November 2022 in Panama City, and at the CITES Roundtable on Sustainable Wildlife Finance held on 27 – 28 October 2022 in Nairobi, as well as the visibility activities that have been undertaken.

253. The first in-person meeting of the current AEFSC was held on 29 – 30 June 2023. The meeting was also the first in-person meeting of the AEFSC held since 2019. The meeting was hosted by the AEF Secretariat (housed by the UNEP Law Division) at the UN Complex in Gigiri, Nairobi. All the subregional representatives, donor State members (including observers), and ex-officio members were in attendance. The core discussion of the meeting focused on developing a strategic approach for the AEF's operations and engagement with the range States through having more strategic projects, more effective communication, and increasing synergies with other conservation stakeholders.

Projects funded by the African Elephant Fund

254. Since the inception of the AEF in 2010, sixty-one projects have been completed in the African elephant range States in support of the implementation of the African Elephant Action Plan (AEAP). This includes forty-seven projects approved before the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. Highlights of the projects that have been completed since November 2021 include: set up of an efficient and reliable communication network and control room in Queen Elizabeth Protected Area in Uganda to enhance law enforcement operations; Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool (SMART) software has been rolled out in Zimbabwe for use in adaptive elephant management and monitoring; joint capacity building workshops on investigating and prosecuting wildlife crime was undertaken for Malawi's law enforcement (judiciary, prosecutors, police, etc), thus increasing enforcement of wildlife laws; also in Malawi, the Dedza Salima Forest boundary has been reinforced thus reducing human-elephant conflict (HEC) incidences and enhancing protection of elephant habitats; in Nigeria, enforcement capacity has been strengthened through use of SMART software to conduct efficient anti-poaching patrols; local communities in Togo have been trained on alternative income generating activities that also serve as elephant deterrents, thereby reducing HEC incidences while supporting community livelihoods. An inventory of elephants and other large mammals has been established in the Gamba Protected Area Complex of Gabon to inform the country's conservation strategies.

255. In 2020, the AEF issued an emergency call for proposals to provide funding to the range States to address elephant conservation challenges related to the pandemic. Nineteen projects were approved, of which fourteen have been completed as at June 2023. Highlights of the projects include training and equipping of law enforcement staff to conduct efficient anti-poaching patrols (Ghana, Malawi, Nigeria, Uganda, Zimbabwe and Chad); set up of community-led patrols (Kenya, Niger and Uganda); construction and reinforcement of fences (Kenya), training local communities on appropriate elephant push-back techniques that are also income-generating sources (Kenya, Niger, Togo and Zimbabwe), and collaring of six elephant groups (South Sudan).

256. Currently, there are nine projects marked as ongoing, of which four are Covid-19 projects. Five projects with a funding allocation of USD 506,375 are also in the pipeline to be initiated.

Funding

257. In terms of overall funding and expenditure, the total funds received by the African Elephant Fund as at June 2023 is USD 4,995,512, while the total funds that have been allocated is USD 4,069,565.

258. The donor funding received to the Fund from 2022 to 30 June 2023 is as follows:

Table 1: Donor Funding

Donor	**Amount (Euros)**
France (2022)	10,000
The Netherlands (2022)	120,000
France (2023)	20,000

259. In keeping with its annual contributions, the Government of the Netherlands has pledged to contribute EUR 120,000 to the AEF in 2023.

260. The Chair, on behalf of the AEFSC and all the African elephant range States, would like to appreciate and thank the Governments of the Netherlands, Germany, France and the European Commission for contributing the needed financial resources towards the implementation of the African Elephant Action Plan

261. The development of a resource mobilization strategy remains a priority for the AEFSC, with the view of enabling the development of elephant conservation actions that have long-term and cross-boundary impacts. The AEFSC appeals to Parties, donors, IGOs, NGOs, private sector and philanthropists to support the implementation of the projects being implemented in the African elephant range States by contributing to the Fund.

The review of the African Elephant Action Plan

262. The review of the African Elephant Action Plan (AEAP) was initiated in 2018. Two consultative meetings and discussions were held with the African elephant range States in 2019 to gather views and expert opinions on the recommended revisions to the Plan. The first meeting was held at the 8th Members Meeting of the IUCN/SSC African Elephant Specialist Group in Pretoria, South Africa in July 2019, while the second was hosted by UNEP in Nairobi, Kenya in November 2019. These meetings produced technical reports with proposed recommendations for the review of the AEAP. The review process was interrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic. However, the process was reinitiated in 2022, during which a consultant was recruited to support the consolidation of the outcomes of the reports, and produce a revised draft of the AEAP. The draft was shared with the AEFSC and the range States for comments and inputs which were utilized to produce further drafts of the AEAP. A virtual briefing on the draft revised AEAP was held with the African elephant range States on 1 February 2023. Further inputs revived from the range States during and after the meeting were incorporated to produce the final draft, which was then circulated to the range States for approval via a no-objection procedure by 31 March 2023. No comments or objections were submitted by the range States hence the revised AEAP (2023) has been approved to guide the continent's elephant conservation actions for the next five years.

263. The most significant changes to the AEAP are the reprioritization of the first three objectives which puts Reduce Human-Elephant Conflict as the first priority objective. In addition, the two-species classification of the African elephant (*Loxodonta africana* (Savanna elephant) and *Loxodonta cyclotis* (Forest elephant)) has been recognized in the revised AEAP.

264. A rough cost estimate of the financial resources required to implement the revised AEAP in the next two years was also developed.

Terms of Reference

265. The revised Terms of Reference (ToRs) for the review of the AEAP were approved by the African elephant range States via a no-objection procedure in January 2022. The ToRs have been updated on the AEF website (https://www.africanelephantfund.org/en/terms-of-reference).

Participation at CITES CoP19

266. The AEF organized a successful event in the margins of the Nineteenth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (CITES CoP19). The theme of the event was “Emergency Action: Strengthening African elephant conservation efforts amidst the Covid-19 pandemic” and took place on 23 November 2022. The event featured presentations on some of the Covid-19 projects implemented in each of the four subregions. It highlighted the significance of the emergency funding at a time of increased threats to the African elephant and reduced financial resources, and the action by the range States to reinforce their conservation efforts.

Visibility

267. Since November 2021, the AEF Secretariat has undertaken several activities to engage the range States and create greater awareness regarding the activities undertaken by the AEF.

268. To celebrate the World Wildlife Day 2022, the AEF Secretariat organized an exhibit that run from 28 February to 4 March 2022 during the resumed fifth session of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA 5.2) and the UNEP@50 celebrations. The exhibit showcased the work being undertaken by the AEF, the CITES, and the CMS, to support member States in sustainably managing their wildlife populations and their habitats.

269. Another exhibit was organized during the Fourth Meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (OEWG-4). It run from 21 to 26 June 2022 and highlighted how the work being undertaken by the AEF, CITES and CMS contributes to the achievement of several targets outlined in the Kunming-Montreal global biodiversity framework.

270. A short documentary on the Covid-19 project implemented in Uganda was produced (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UqMTSdTarRw), accompanied by a complementary article (https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/frontline-against-wildlife-poaching-uganda). These were launched on the UNEP homepage to coincide with the opening of CITES CoP19. They highlighted the critical need for funding to address increased risks to elephants and wildlife during the pandemic, and the timeliness of the AEF funding at a time of decreased funding from other sources.

271. The AEF Secretariat continues to submit inputs to the quarterly reports for the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) of UNEP.

272. The newsletter highlighting the activities undertaken by the AEF in 2020 and 2021 has also been published on the AEF website (https://express.adobe.com/page/2uELECKnKzVh2/).

Conclusions

273. The Standing Committee is requested to note the approval of the revised AEAP by the African elephant range States. The reprioritization of the objectives which has established ‘Reduce Human-Elephant Conflict’ as the first priority objective reflects the persistent and increasing prevalent issue of human-elephant conflicts in the continent. The AEFSC continues to call upon governments, donors, IGOs and NGOs to contribute financial resources to the African Elephant Fund to support the implementation of the revised AEAP.

Closure of domestic ivory markets (Decisions 18.117 (Rev. CoP19) and 18.118)

Introduction

Decisions 18.117 (Rev. CoP19) and 18.118 on *Closure of domestic ivory markets*, notes the following:

> *18.117 (Rev. CoP19) Decision directed to: Parties*
>
> *Parties that have not closed their domestic markets for commercial trade in raw and worked ivory are requested to report to the Secretariat for consideration by the Standing Committee at its 77th and 78th meetings on what measures they are taking to ensure that their domestic ivory markets are not contributing to poaching or illegal trade.*
>
> *18.118 Decision directed to: Secretariat*
>
> *The Secretariat shall compile the reports and make them available to Parties in advance of the Standing Committee meetings.*

Submissions received in response to Notification No. 2023/077 are presented below (in English only and in the format as received) for consideration by the Standing Committee. The Secretariat would like to thank the Parties for the reports they submitted.

Japan

Japan's report pursuant to Decision 18.117(Rev. CoP19)

Japan has been implementing stringent measures to ensure that its domestic ivory market does not contribute to poaching and illegal trade. The ongoing measures are mainly summarized as follows. Japan is determined to continue making its utmost efforts to implement the CITES at home in a sincere manner.

Ongoing Measures

1. Legislation on ivory control (outline of the amended ACES)

(1) The amended Act on the Conservation of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (ACES), including tighter regulations on ivory transactions within its own borders, came into effect in June 2018. Major revisions are as follows. Details of the amended law are available in the Japan's report submitted as Doc. 27.4 A11 at SC70.

a) Raw and worked ivory business operators must be registered to the Government. Business operators must fulfil all requirements for registration, which should be renewed every five years.
b) Business operators must register all tusks of their possession.
c) Business operators must prepare and keep inventory data including transaction records and traceability information records for cut pieces.
d) Business operators must indicate information including their business registration number and business operator's name, at the time of display or advertisement.
e) The Japanese government publishes a list of registered business operators.
f) Heavier penalties are to be imposed on business operators' offense. i.e. introduction of imprisonment, increased fines

(2) Intense scrutiny for the registration of a whole tusk
Since July 2019, registration of a whole tusk requires the submission of the result of scientific radiocarbon dating or other equivalent proof that shows the tusk was imported before the adoption of the CITES trade ban for Japan, unless an applicant submits a customs document or an import permit. A third-party affidavits becomes no longer sufficient enough to prove the legitimacy of a tusk without additional official evidence.

2. Strengthened management measures on domestic ivory transactions (including those under planning)

- More effective and intensive on-site inspections and patrols at antique markets by the competent authorities are continued to be conducted in order to ensure strict compliance within the borders.
- The government is initiating digitalization of business operators' reporting system on transactions and inventories in order to enhance the traceability of ivory products. It will enable more accurate stocktaking of domestic ivory product distribution, and facilitate more effective control on ivory products which lack enough traceability.
- Competent authorities enhance and improve website and online public relations to raise public awareness, and disseminate information on CITES and related domestic legislation regarding wildlife transactions as well as regulations on ivory products. Website about CITES, ACES, and conservation and sustainable use of wildlife renewed in April 2021 (in Japanese and English).
- Competent authorities reiterate to widely announce the prohibition on bringing ivory products in/out of Japan targeting those who travel across the borders.
  Posters to raise attention are displayed in neighboring countries where Japan is placed among popular tourist destinations. The competent authorities also have formally requested businesses to prevent ivory products from being taken out of Japan without permissions.
- Notice on ivory trade regulations are announced at major tourist attractions in Japan in cooperation with local governments of several big cities. The Japan National Tourism Organization has posted related information on its website and app for foreign visitors.
- Capacity building training programs are consecutively implemented for officials in charge of monitoring and control on transactions of ivory.

Note: Major large-scale online shopping platform organizers such as Mercari and Rakuten in 2017 and Yahoo in 2019 have completely halted trading ivory products on their markets.

3. International cooperation

- Japan contributes to Range States' anti-poaching endeavor through the CITES Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) Programme.
- In cooperation with China, Japan continues to seek an opportunity to organize a bilateral meeting between Management Authorities, which has been postponed due to Covid-19 pandemics. Through such dialogues, Japan fortifies collaboration with China as a neighboring country, which put in place bans on domestic trade, in order to prevent illegal trade in ivory products effectively.

4. Privately-held stocks of elephant ivory

(1) Whole tusks

In order to trade whole tusks domestically, each tusk must be registered under the Act on the Conservation of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (ACES). The number and quantity of the registered whole tusks as of the end of December 2022 are shown below.

Type of specimen	Number of tusks	Total weight (kg)
Whole tusks		
a) African elephant	16,512	174,309
b) Asian elephant	144	794
Total	16,656	175,102

(2) Cut pieces, tips and ivory products

Ivories not in the form of whole tusk (i.e. cut pieces, tips or ivory products) are controlled through a registration system whereby business operators have to report to the authorities to be able to engage in domestic commercial trade. All of these operators, such as manufacturers, wholesalers or retailers, must register a certain amount of information such as their names, addresses and stockpiles to the authorities. Furthermore, they are obliged to submit to the authorities a report on the balance of stockpiles and an inventory describing the contents of transactions.

The quantity of cut pieces, tips and ivory products reported by the business operators as of the end of March 2022 are shown below.

(Cut pieces, tips)

Description	Total weight (kg)
Cut pieces, Tips	75,949

(Products)

Description	Total quantity
Sign seals	829,025
Accessories	545,029
Parts of accessories	2,950,201
Furnishing goods including parts	39,029
Stationeries including parts	496
Smoking supplies including parts	5,806
Buddhist altar articles including parts	42,707
Musical instruments including parts	62,161
Tableware including parts	16,239
Tea utensils including parts	23,328
Indoor recreational equipment including parts	2,270
Convenience goods including parts	52,309
Others	42,921

Note:

Throughout this document, “legally imported” means:

-Whole ivory tusks, cut pieces of ivory and worked ivory products that had pre-existed in Japan ahead of the adoption of CITES trade ban (in 1980* for Asian elephants and 1990 for African elephant). *Japan joined CITES in 1980.

-Whole ivory tusks, cut pieces of ivory and worked ivory products which were imported to Japan with pre-convention certificates issued by exporting countries under CITES.

-Whole ivory tusks which were imported to Japan in 1999 and 2009, as exceptions approved under CITES.

Thailand

Thailand's response to Notification 2023/077- Closure of domestic ivory markets

In Notification No. 2023/077, the CITES Secretariat requests Parties that have not closed their domestic markets for commercial trade in raw and worked ivory to report on measures taken to ensure that their domestic ivory markets are not contributing to poaching or illegal trade.

1. Legislations for control of domestic ivory trade in Thailand

The Elephant Ivory Act B.E.2558 enacted in 2015 is still in place for regulating trade in ivory sourced from privately owned elephants (*Elephas maximus*) or captive elephants. The Act requires ivory to be registered. Registration of newly cut elephant ivory must be accompanied by a certificate of origin for elephant ivory issued by registrars of the Draught Animal Act. The certificate provides information around sourced elephant and photo, size and weight of the obtained ivory, to ensure legality of the domesticated ivory. Further, a written notification of change(s) related to the registered ivory is required, including transfer of ownership and modification of the ivory. Permit is required for domestic trade of the ivory. Ivory traders are obligated to keep accounts and submit copies to the officials at the specified timeframe. Upon selling ivory, the ivory traders are required to issue sale certificate(s) to customers for further registration. Any ivory trader that violates the Act shall be liable to imprisonment of not exceeding three years or a fine not exceeding six million baht (≈ USD 173,000) or both.

In 2019, the Wild Animal Reservation and Protection Act (WARPA) has been amended. The amended WARPA includes increase of penalty for violation. African elephant (*Loxodonta africana*) and wild Asian elephant (*Elephas maximus*) are still under protection of WARPA as protected species. As such, import, export, and domestic trade of its ivory without permission shall be punishable by a maximum term of imprisonment of 10 years or a maximum fine of one million baht (≈ USD 29,000) or both.

2. Monitoring and other supportive efforts

After easing from the COVID-19 restrictions, officers resume physical inspections of ivory shops countrywide to ensure domestic ivory trade not contribute to poaching of elephants or illegal trade of ivory. Surin in the Northeast and provinces of Nakhonsawan and Uthai Thani are ivory manufacturing areas and been comprehensively monitored to prevent entry of illegal ivory into the domestic markets. In addition, illegal trade has been monitored by the Wild Hawk and the Tiger King, specialized task forces, to address illegal wildlife trade, including those occurred on the internet.

Ivory stockpiles held by government has been annually inspected and reported to the CITES Secretariat within the timeframe. This inspection enables checks of the ivory stocks confiscated both by Thai Customs and Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation (DNP) and prevents leaking of confiscated ivory into markets.

Identification of the provenance of the ivory is a challenging task for enforcement authorities, Thailand applied Near Infrared Spectroscopy (NIRS) technique to differentiate ivory sourced from African, wild Asian, and domesticated Asian elephants. NIRS technique is a non-destructive method used to investigate composition of ivory which is mainly influenced by geochemical factors of habitat, food and water consumed by elephants. This study established the potential of NIRS to discriminate the ivory. Larger sample of ivory is needed to enable effective identification to facilitate future in-field investigations and trade monitoring to prevent the laundering of illegal ivory by enforcement officers.

To better understand domestic trade in the country, Thailand conducted a study of ivory supply chain. There are five key actor groups in the legal, domestic supply chain in Thailand: elephant owners, intermediaries, manufacturers, retailers, and ivory consumers. Tusks cutting is a non-lethal, long-established and necessary practice in domestic elephant keeping. Selling of tusks is increasing due to the rising living costs of Thai elephant owners. The legal ivory trade provides extra income for Thai elephant owners, but market access is not equal among them. Elephant keeping networks facilitate the flow of raw ivory to buyers. This finding emphasizes potential in these networks for further communication and engagement. Each year, Thai domesticated elephants supply, at least, ≈375 kg of legal raw ivory. About 65% of this is possessed privately; the remaining 35% supplies the commercial manufacturing of ivory products. Newly-obtained ivory became the major source of the supply entering the commercial trade. Further monitoring of the supply chain, based on the study, include the trade volume and the market price of the raw ivory that will provide useful information about market interactions and the potential entry of illegal stock. With stable demand, the increased availability of illegal stock should decrease the price of Thai ivory and result in the lowering of the

legal supply volume used in manufacturing. Trade monitoring will also highlight the proportional change between newly obtained and pre-legislation stocks in manufacturing.

3. Public educations and demand reductions

Thailand has continually reinforced understanding among public on ivory-related legislations and impact of illegal ivory trade, as well as informing foreign visitors not to buy and take ivory product out of Thailand. Public education campaigns largely conducted in key locations such as airports, shopping centers, tourist attractions, and flea markets, where a large number of foreign tourists visit. These campaigns also aim to educate local children and students about wildlife conservation to create a collective effort in curbing unlawful trade of ivory, and foster a culture of protection for elephant species. - 3 -

In addition to activities carried out by DNP, there are comprehensive campaigns of demand reductions campaigns conducted in the past couple of years by NGOs, including USAID, TRAFFIC, WWF and WildAid, with close collaborations with DNP. These include the following activities.

The "Travel Ivory Free" campaign, organized by WWF has been launched to raise awareness and promote responsible tourism in Thailand, aligning with the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) policy. This collective initiative sought to empower travellers and Thai citizens to make conscientious choices by refraining from purchasing ivory and embracing sustainable souvenirs and gifts. By encouraging mindful consumption during travels in Thailand, the campaign aspired to make a positive impact on elephant conservation efforts, aligned with the vision of preserving Thailand's wildlife for future generations. With support of education sector, WWF’s also conducted trainings to educate Thai tourist guides around impacts of illegal ivory trade to wildlife conservation.

The Ivory Free campaign, launched in Thailand by WildAid, highlights the devastating impact of ivory poaching on African elephant populations. Through mass communications such as billboards, video public service announcements, social media efforts, and a web app, the campaign encourages people not to buy ivory and supports stronger enforcement against illegal ivory shipments. With a focus on key countries, including Thailand, the campaign seeks to challenge misconceptions about ivory and rally public support to end demand for ivory products. In Thailand, where elephants hold cultural significance, the campaign aligns with the nation's pride in protecting this majestic creature, and emphasizes the Thai public's vital role in saving elephants from the poaching crisis.

Based on findings obtained by the USAID Wildlife Asia’s study around beliefs driving ivory consumption in Thailand, WildAid, with collaboration with the International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB), conducted a two-day practical training for Buddhist monks and nuns to provide information on illegal wildlife trafficking, laws, and strategies to reduce the demand for wildlife products. This involved producing printing media for Buddhist monks and nuns to use in disseminating information to their followers, with content related to laws and related penalties, aiming to communicate with the general public.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) collaborated with DNP and WildAid to launch the "Beautiful without Ivory" campaign. It aimed to reduce the usage and purchase of elephant ivory jewelry and accessories among women. Prominent figures, such as a Thai supermodel and a renowned astrology, have joined these demand reduction champions. Based on the achievements of the 2020 "Beautiful without Ivory" campaign, which effectively targeted individuals drawn to ivory jewelry due to its perceived beauty, survey results revealed a significant 50% decrease in the demand and social acceptability of ivory consumption among potential Thai consumers. Building on this success, the campaign further endeavored to dissuade women from seeking ivory products, promoting ethical alternatives and fostering a transformative shift in consumer behavior to safeguard elephants and their natural habitats.

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United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

The UK Ivory Act 2018 came into force on 6 June 2022. The Act bans dealing in items containing or made of elephant ivory, unless they are registered as exempt or certified as exempt, under the Ivory Act 2018. Dealing in ivory means: to buy, sell or hire it; offer or arrange to buy, sell or hire it; keep it for sale or hire; export it from the UK for sale or hire; or import it into the UK for sale or hire.

There are five exemptions from the ban for:

- musical instruments made before 1975 with less than 20% ivory by volume
- items made before 3 March 1947 with less than 10% ivory by volume
- portrait miniatures made before 1918 with a total surface area of no more than 320 square centimetres
- items a qualifying museum intends to buy or hire
- items made before 1918 that are of outstandingly high artistic, cultural or historical value.

On 23 May 2023 the UK Government announced they intend to extend the Ivory Act 2018 to hippopotamus, walrus, narwhal, killer whale (orca) and sperm whale.