

SHORT FACT SHEET—ZIMBABWE ELEPHANT MANAGEMENT

- Zimbabwe’s elephant population has grown from under 5,000 in 1900 to over 83,000 today. Zimbabwe’s elephant population, alone, is larger than the estimated populations of West and Central Africa combined (without including guesses), and is almost the same size as the estimated population of all of Eastern Africa. Zimbabwe maintains the second-largest population in the world.

Region / Country	Estimated Elephant Population¹
West Africa	11,489
Central Africa	24,119
Southern Africa - Zimbabwe alone -	293,447 - 82,630 -
Eastern Africa	86,373

- Zimbabwe’s elephant population is also almost 20% larger than when the FWS made its last positive enhancement finding in 1997. Zimbabwe’s elephant population is stable, despite rapid growth of the country’s human population growth, which increased by 24.33% between 2000 and 2016.²
- Hunting offtakes are a fraction of a percent and have no impact on the overall elephant population. Average annual offtakes between 2010-2013 were 0.276% of the total population. Moreover, hunters target older bull elephant that have already reproduced and spread their genes.³
- Zimbabwe’s wildlife authority, the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZPWMA), is a “parastatal.” It is separate and largely funded separately from the Central government. ZPWMA was not affected by the recent Presidential transition which, in any event, has been proceeding peacefully. President Mnangagwa has confirmed the same Minister of Water, Climate, and Environment, Oppah Muchinguri-Kashiri, and the same Permanent Secretary. ZPWMA is proceeding with “business as usual.”⁴

¹ Within a 95% confidence limit, without the plus/minus interval, and without “Informed Guesses.” IUCN African Elephant Specialist Group, African Elephant Status Report (2016), <https://www.iucn.org/ssc-groups/mammals/african-elephant-specialist-group>.

² Zimbabwe’s population has grown from 12.22 million in 2000 to 16.15 million in 2016. World Bank, <https://data.worldbank.org/country/zimbabwe?view=chart>.

³ ZPWMA (April 2014, July 2015).

⁴ ZPWMA Website, <http://zimparcs.org/about-zimparcs/>; see also news reports of the transition in Zimbabwe, e.g., <http://www.thezimbabwemail.com/main/mnangagwa-swears-new-cabinet/>; <https://citizen.co.za/news/news-africa/1746240/mnangagwa-names-new-zimbabwean-cabinet/>.

- Elephant habitat in Zimbabwe includes approximately 27,000 km² in National Parks, 18,900 km² in Safari Areas, over 50,000 km² in Communal (CAMPFIRE) Areas, and 7,000 km² in private conservancies.⁵ Hunting areas are over three times the size of the National Parks in Zimbabwe. Communal Areas (90%) and private conservancies are almost wholly funded by hunting revenues, which justify the dedication of this land to wildlife habitat in place of alternative uses like livestock.
- Hunting fees make up a significant portion of ZPWMA's revenues. Trophy and concession fees generated almost \$5.1 million for ZPWMA in 2014. Over half of these fees were paid by U.S. clients. Approximately 80% of ZPWMA's revenues are allocated for law enforcement. Put simply, hunting revenues from U.S. hunters pay for most of the anti-poaching across Zimbabwe's elephant range. And the FWS suspension of elephant trophy imports reduced ZPWMA's revenues by almost 14% in 2014 compared to 2013. The suspension has reduced the revenues available for ZPWMA (as well as CAMPFIRE communities and individual operators) to combat poaching.⁶
- Poaching in Zimbabwe has generally been kept under control so as not to have a national effect. Hunting operators support this successful anti-poaching by funding their own patrol teams, paying salaries for community scouts, and assisting ZPWMA with equipment, rations, petrol, and other needs. Hunting operators are the first line of defense against poaching. For example, Charlton McCallum Safaris in the Dande and Mbire areas spends an average of \$85,000/year on anti-poaching. From 2010 to 2016, their efforts led to an 80% decline in elephant poaching in an important border region.⁷
- Regulated hunting also reduces poaching by incentivizing greater tolerance among the rural communities who live side-by-side with dangerous game species. Hunting provides most of the revenue in CAMPFIRE Areas and averaged \$2.2 million/year prior to the FWS suspension of elephant trophy imports. Elephant hunting alone generated approximately \$1.6 million per year. These funds are invested in game monitoring and community projects such as boreholes, classrooms and clinics, food purchases, and other livelihood improvements for Zimbabwe's rural poor. Approximately 200,000 families directly and another 600,000 indirectly benefit from CAMPFIRE revenues. Because of these benefits, poaching and problem animal control are low in CAMPFIRE Areas. This tolerance is despite the fact that

⁵ UN Protected Planet, <https://protectedplanet.net>; CAMPFIRE Association of Zimbabwe Press Statement (November 2017), <http://campfirezimbabwe.org/index.php/news-spotlight/26-press-statement...1>. Elephant habitat in Zimbabwe also includes over 10,000 km² in Forest Areas managed by the parastatal Forestry Commission.

⁶ Note that hunting and concession fees are considerably higher than this, but because of the grant of "appropriate authority," hunting fees accrue to the landholder on communal and private land, not to ZPWMA. "Appropriate authority" incentivizes landholders to maintain and increase wildlife populations because they retain the benefits of the sustainable use. ZPWMA (April 2014, July 2015).

⁷ Dande Anti-Poaching Unit Website, <http://dapuzim.com/>.

elephant destroyed over 7,000 hectares of crops and claimed the lives of approximately 50 people in CAMPFIRE communities between 2010 and 2015.⁸

- There is no evidence that ivory poaching—in Zimbabwe or anywhere else—is tied to terrorism, and that claim has been debunked by credible research, although it is often repeated in popular media.⁹ In any event, regulated hunting reduces the poaching: in the Southern African countries that depend upon regulated hunting as a conservation tool (including Zimbabwe), poaching levels are the lowest in Africa. According to CITES' Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) data, Southern African countries have the lowest Proportion of Illegally Killed Elephant (PIKE). PIKE is used to assess whether poaching levels are unsustainable. It has never risen above the sustainability threshold in Southern Africa, even in 2011, when the recent poaching crisis was at its highest level. PIKE has declined in Zimbabwe's MIKE sites since 2011.¹⁰
- Zimbabwe's National Elephant Management Plan (2015-2020) is the most up-to-date plan in Africa. Responding to the FWS' concerns, this new plan identifies specific action items, outputs, and Key Performance Indicators to measure the success of plan implementation. The national plan is supplemented by four regional action plans with the same framework to address the unique challenges of each range.

⁸ CAMPFIRE Association Press Statement, <http://campfirezimbabwe.org/index.php/news-spotlight/26-press-statement...1>; CAMPFIRE Association (April 2014).

⁹ This research is available at: https://rusi.org/sites/default/files/201509_an_illusion_of_complicity_0.pdf; see also <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/30/opinion/the-ivory-funded-terrorism-myth.html>.

¹⁰ CITES/MIKE Website, https://www.cites.org/eng/prog/mike/data_and_reports.