

Amend the present Appendix-II listing of the population of Zimbabwe of African Elephant *Loxodonta africana* by removing the annotation in order to achieve an unqualified Appendix II listing

Proponents: Namibia and Zimbabwe

Note: See *Background to the African Elephant proposals for a history of the African Elephant under CITES*.

Summary: The Zimbabwean population of the African Elephant *Loxodonta africana* was transferred from Appendix I to Appendix II in 1997; it is currently covered by annotation 6. The proponents (Namibia and Zimbabwe) seek to achieve an unqualified Appendix-II listing of the Zimbabwean African Elephant population, arguing that effective and sustainable conservation of Zimbabwe's elephants is dependent on establishing regular open market sales of elephant ivory to fund management and enforcement actions.

The most comprehensive and reliable information on African Elephant distribution and population is contained in the African Elephant Database (AED), maintained by the IUCN/SSC African Elephant Specialist Group¹. The 2013 version gives the range as just under 77,000km² ¹ (the Supporting Statement indicates that the four main elephant populations have a combined range of ca. 63,000km²). The most recent population data available in the AED are from the end of 2013. These along with figures from 2002 and 2006 are presented here divided into 'definite', 'probable', 'possible' and 'speculative'. The database is being updated with the most recent data available, and a full version will be available at CoP17. Permission has been granted for use in the IUCN/TRAFFIC Analyses of Proposals the most recent figures from Zimbabwe. Because of differences in survey techniques and extent of coverage, figures for different years are not strictly comparable. The most recent data are presented in the form in which they have been submitted to the AED and therefore a total estimate is not given.

Data for Zimbabwe's population of elephants from the African Elephant Database¹ are:

2002 – 81,555 definite, 7039 probable, 7373 possible and 291 speculative;
 2006 – 84,416 definite, 7033 probable, 7367 possible and 291 speculative;
 2013 – 67,954 definite, 6974 probable, 6974 possible and 14,730 speculative (all provisional estimates);

More recent data are:

Survey Area	Year	Estimate	Source
Gonarezhou and SVC	2014	11,120 +/-2753	Dunham & van der Westhuizen, 2015
Greater Mapungubwe Trans- frontier Conservation Area	2014	212	Selier & Page, 2014
Northwest Matabeleland	2014	53,991 +/-7711	Dunham et al., 2015a
Sebungwe	2014	3407 +/- 1215	Dunham et al., 2015b
Various Areas	2014	2143	Dunham, 2015
Zambezi Valley	2014	11,657 +/-2259	Dunham et al., 2015c

The Supporting Statement provides a 2014 estimate of 80,507.

The Supporting Statement indicates that Zimbabwe adopts an experimental, rather than programmatic, adaptive management approach towards its elephants, involving a devolutionary policy that allows its primary stakeholders (those with wildlife on their land) to experiment with elephant management. It alludes to a method of quota setting for elephants based on monitoring of mean tusk weight of trophies which takes into account the long response time of elephant populations to any change in their management regime. The Supporting Statement includes an analysis of legal ivory trade from Zimbabwe for 1980 to 2014, as reported in the CITES Trade Database, noting discrepancies between import and export data and showing that recorded annual exports for 2012 and 2013 exceeded 20t, the first time this has occurred since 1990.

The Supporting Statement indicates that the average mortality due to illegal hunting is 4.5% of the total population noting that the populations in two of the main areas of elephant distribution in the country are increasing while in two others they are declining rapidly towards extinction.

CoP17 Doc. 57.5 (Report on Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE)) contains the most up-to-date synthesised information on illegal killing of elephants, based on information from 2003 until the end of 2015. It reports on the proportion of illegally killed elephants (PIKE) at 58 sites in 30 countries in Africa and 27 sites in 13 countries in Asia. A PIKE of 0.5 or lower is generally considered sustainable. In its analysis of sub-regional trends in Africa, the report observes (para 14) that the southern African sub-region (Angola, Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia, Zimbabwe) is the only one of the four African sub-regions where the estimated PIKE has not exceeded the 0.5 level in the period 2003 to 2015. MIKE data are usually not considered meaningful at national level because of small sample sizes².

The Supporting Statement cites an estimate of 439t of ivory illegally traded in the period 2002 to 2014 in Zimbabwe, compared with legal ivory production of 180t and trophy hunting of 74t in the same period.

The annex to CoP17 Doc. 57.5 presents an analysis of illegal ivory trade, based on data in ETIS. Part of this is a cluster analysis of 55 countries or territories divided into 13 groups with similar characteristics. Zimbabwe forms part of group eight, along with Botswana and Namibia. The report's analysis of this group is as follows:

“As in the CoP16 analysis, three of the four African Elephant range States whose elephant populations were transferred to Appendix II in 1997 fall in the same group. These countries regularly report data to ETIS. In terms of all data which implicate these countries in an ivory seizure, this southern African grouping reflects middle range values in terms of mean number of seizures and the mean weight of ivory seized. The measure for assessing the presence of organised crime stands at zero which is indisputably a good sign. Governance indicators are mixed, however, with the rule of law score problematic and suggesting the presence of corruption, but the relatively high law enforcement ratio partially mitigates that concern. Indeed, as before, Zimbabwe is the country that pulls the rule of law score down, indicating far greater governance challenges exist in that country, but it is worth noting that Namibia's scores have also dropped too. The domestic ivory market score is low, reflecting the complete absence of a market in Botswana and a very low level of trade in Namibia. Again, Zimbabwe is the exception with the tenth largest ivory market of any country in this analysis.”

The proponents argue that paragraph h) of annotation 6, which states that no proposals to allow trade in elephant ivory from populations already in Appendix II shall be submitted before nine years after the sale of ivory (which took place in November 2008) cannot override the right of Parties under the Convention to submit an amendment proposal at any time.

Analysis: The Zimbabwean population of African Elephant was transferred from Appendix I to Appendix II, under a series of constraints set out in an annotation (6). Acceptance of the current proposal would delete this annotation as it refers to Zimbabwe. There are no explicit guidelines in *Res. Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP16)* as to how to deal with a proposal to amend or delete an annotation for an Appendix-II listed species. However, these constraints can be interpreted as special measures under the terms of the precautionary measures in Annex 4 of *Res. Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP16)*. It would be appropriate to examine whether these precautionary measures are still met under the proposed change.

The Zimbabwean African Elephant population does not have a restricted range, is not small, and is not undergoing a marked decline. It does not therefore appear to meet the biological criteria for inclusion in Appendix I set out in Annex 1 of *Res. Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP16)*.

Although reference is made to a possible quota-setting method, no specific export quota or other special measure is proposed in the Supporting Statement. Under the precautionary measures set out in Annex 4 of *Res. Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP16)*, Parties would therefore need to be satisfied that Zimbabwe is implementing the requirements of the Convention, particularly Article IV, and that appropriate enforcement controls and compliance with the requirements of the Convention are in place.

The Supporting Statement indicates that Zimbabwe adopts an experimental, adaptive approach to management of its African Elephants. It is not possible to determine *a priori* if such an approach would be

effective in implementing Article IV if this proposal were accepted. Regarding enforcement controls and compliance, the Supporting statement itself, as well as analysis from ETIS in the annex to CoP17 Doc. 57.5 indicates that this may be problematic in some areas. It is likely that in this case the precautionary measures may not be met.

Sources for population estimates:

Dunham, K. C. (2015). National Summary of Aerial Survey Results for Elephant in Zimbabwe: 2014. Harare, Zimbabwe: Parks and Wild Life Management Authority.

Dunham, K. M., Mackie, C. S., Nyaguse, G., & Zhuwau, C. (2015a). Aerial Survey of Elephants and other Large Herbivores in north-west Matabeleland (Zimbabwe): 2014. Harare, Zimbabwe: Parks and Wild Life Management Authority.

Dunham, K. C., Mackie, C. S., Nyaguse, G., & Zhuwau, C. (2015b). Aerial Survey of Elephants and other Large Herbivores in the Sebungwe (Zimbabwe): 2014. Harare, Zimbabwe: Parks and Wild Life Management Authority.

Dunham, K. M., Mackie, C. S., & Nyaguse, G. (2015c). Aerial Survey of Elephants and other Large Herbivores in the Zambezi Valley (Zimbabwe): 2014. Harare, Zimbabwe.

Dunham, K. M., & van der Westhuizen, H. F. (2015). Aerial Survey of Elephants and other Large Herbivores in Gonarezhou National Park and Save Valley Conservancy (Zimbabwe): 2014. Frankfurt Zoological Society.

Selier, J., & Page, B. (2014). Dry season fixed-wing aerial survey of large mammals in the Northern Tuli Game Reserve and Mapungubwe National Park and of elephants in the Greater Mapungubwe Transfrontier Conservation Area, Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe, August 2014. Central Limpopo River Valley Elephant Research Project and the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Reviewers: D. Skinner and T. Milliken.

References:

Information not referenced in the Summary section is from the Supporting Statement.

¹ IUCN/SSC African Elephant Specialist Group (2013) Continental Totals Provisional African Elephant Population Estimates: update to 31 Dec 2013. http://www.elephantdatabase.org/preview_report/2013_africa_final/2013/Africa. Viewed on 5th July 2016.

² Skinner, D. (2016) *In litt.* to IUCN/TRAFFIC Analyses Team, Cambridge, UK.