



# DEAD or ALIVE?

## VALUING AN ELEPHANT





# PREFACE

“Elephants are among the world’s most charismatic mega fauna and our largest living land mammals. However, the survival of Africa’s elephants is threatened by continuing demand for ivory desired for trinkets, religious statues, ornaments and accessories from Far Eastern Countries. As a result, elephant poaching is rife across Africa, with elephants being killed even in supposed safe and protected areas. The result is the unsustainable slaughter of one elephant every 15 minutes, decimating populations and damaging ecosystems.

This report looks at the financial value of elephants; alive. Every year, thousands of tourists travel to African nations to see elephants, yet without protective regulations, these nations can become devoid of the very animals which the hordes of eager tourists have come to see.

This report finds that alive, elephants present a huge revenue stream to local economies through tourism and, in the long term, elephants are worth significantly more roaming the world’s savannahs and forests than with their tusks sitting on a mantelpiece or adorning someone’s wrist.

Protecting elephants makes monetary sense. Data of this type can be used to show key decision makers that elephant conservation is a far more viable economic proposition than the ivory trade. It’s a powerful incentive to decision

makers in charge of our natural resources to protect the species against rampant poaching.

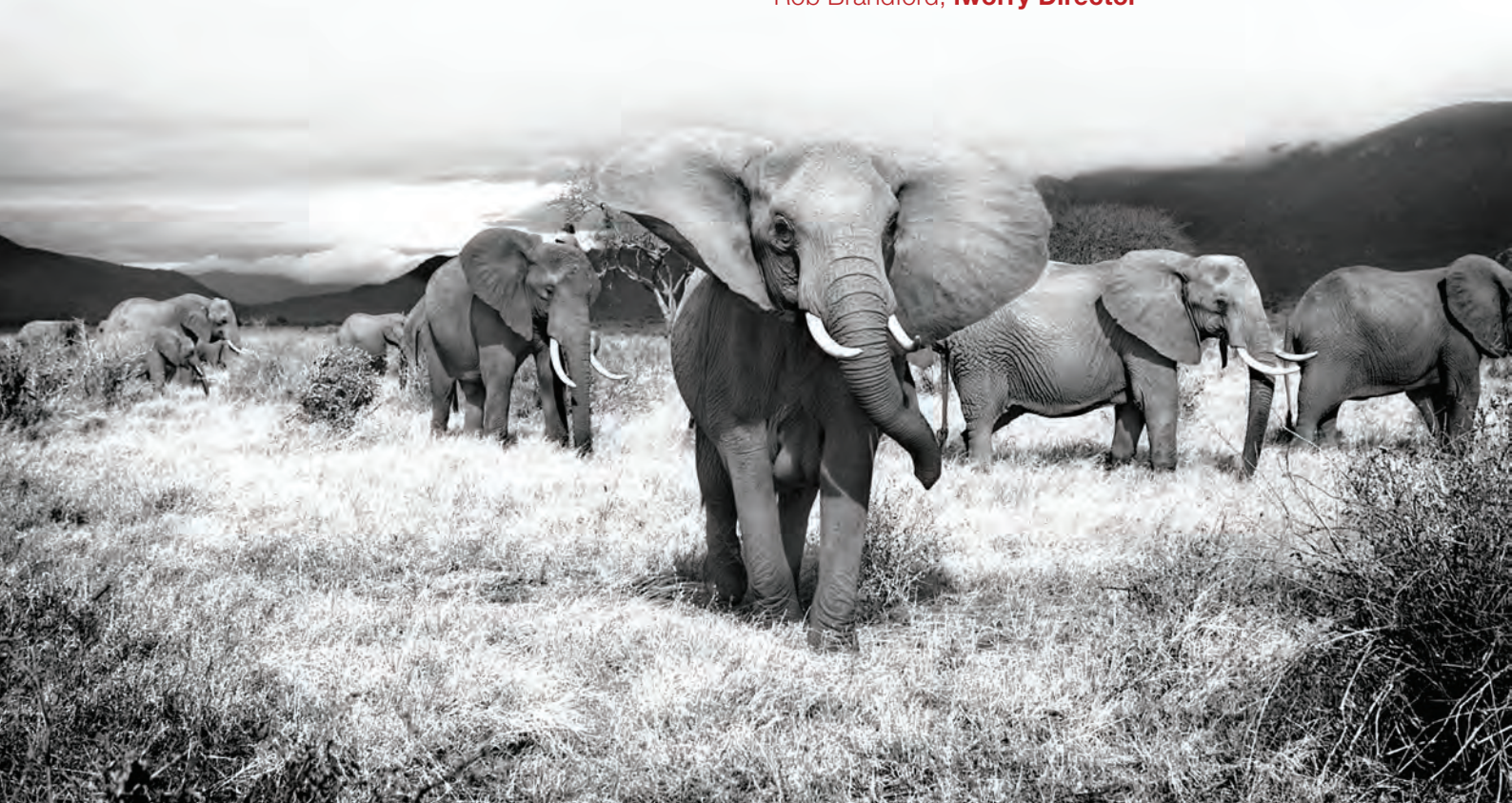
Referring to wild animals as ‘economic commodities’ has created controversy in the past but where policy is determined by the value of an object, it’s time to give the elephant a fair footing.

We must recognise the need to realise the value of our wildlife and environmental heritage in order to pass policies that safeguard against their destruction. Policy makers will not pass effective measures without tangible benefits to society, yet so far the discussion has seemingly only focused on the consumptive value of an elephant, it’s tusks. We need to look at the animal alive.

Arguments to protect Africa’s elephants have typically been based on emotive and environmental reasons – their cognitive abilities, their benefit to the wider environment and their ancient beginnings. To many decision makers, this might be enough. But we must reach those that balance the purse strings to make effective policies happen.

Protecting elephants makes economic sense, whether you’re responsible for a reserve in Tanzania or a National Park in Kenya -- if elephants live, tourists will come and economies can be boosted. It’s another argument as to why we must save elephants and a financially compelling one.”

**Rob Brandford, iworry Director**







# METHODOLOGY

This publication identifies reported ivory seizures worldwide. By 'reported ivory seizures', we mean publicly reported ivory seizures, focusing on newspaper and online reports. We have used a wide range of open source resources, including English, Chinese, and French-language media, but it should be noted that the reported ivory seizures identified in this document may not represent the total number of seizures this year and are only a proportion of all illegal ivory trade.

As part of international monitoring of the illegal trade in ivory, countries party to CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) are mandated to report information on elephant ivory seizures to TRAFFIC via the CITES Secretariat within 90 days of their occurrence which is then added to the ETIS database, though the time frame is often ignored. Variances in law enforcement, the rule of law and corruption levels, mean that reporting rates differ from country to country, and our figures may vary from TRAFFIC reported seizures.

The number of estimated elephants killed per seizure is an estimate and not a definitive number. We are using TRAFFIC's estimate that an average tusk weighs 5kg, extrapolating that an average elephant with two tusks carries 10kg of ivory. We note that this is a very conservative

estimate with 'tuskers' carrying much larger quantities, however this estimate serves as a basis to translate ivory seizure data into a relative estimate of the numbers of elephants represented by individual ivory shipments. There may be a variation between country or even regions with heavily poached elephant populations yielding smaller average tusk sizes while recently poached populations provide larger yields.

This report is produced by iworry, an elephant awareness campaign by the David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust. The iworry campaign raises awareness of the ivory poaching crisis and the impact trade in ivory is having on elephant populations. More information: [www.iworry.org](http://www.iworry.org)

**The David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust** has worked in Kenya for over 35 years to protect, conserve and preserve wildlife and habitats. Their conservation projects include Anti-Poaching and Aerial Surveillance initiatives, Mobile Vet Units, the Orphans' Project, Saving Habitats and Community Outreach. More information: [www.sheldrickwildlifetrust.org](http://www.sheldrickwildlifetrust.org)

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# SUMMARY

Elephants are one of the world's most recognisable mammals, thanks to their size and distinctive tusks. It is these distinctive teeth that are making the species increasingly vulnerable to the point that populations have reached a tipping point; if the slaughter of elephants continues then they will be wiped out within our lifetime .

Policy and decision making in the conservation of natural resources which includes, in many countries, elephants, is influenced more by dollar-denominated measures of benefits and costs than non-monetary measures. With ongoing slaughter threatening Africa's elephant populations, in order to secure the long term future of the species, it is imperative to speak to natural resource policy makers in a language they understand to highlight the benefits of protecting the species and identify the tangible benefits elephants can bring.

A single dead elephant's tusks are estimated to have a raw value of \$21,000 (based on TRAFFIC estimate that an elephant carries an average of 5kg of ivory per tusk). By comparison, the estimated tourism value of a single living elephant is \$1,607,624.83 over its lifetime to travel companies, airlines and local economies thanks to tourists willing to pay generously for a chance to see and photograph the world's largest land mammal. That makes a living elephant, in financial terms, as valuable as 76 dead elephants.

Our research finds that between January and August 2014, a reported 17,799.29kg (17.8 tonnes) of ivory was seized worldwide, representing 1,940 elephants slaughtered for their

tusks. But it's not just elephants that are in danger. The slaughter so far has lost Africa's tourism industry, local communities and economies a total of \$44,554,844.47 alone this year. More killings every day only increases this figure.

As a form of wildlife crime, the illegal trade in ivory benefits criminal gangs, corrupt military units and militia and even terrorist groups including Al-Shabaab and the Lord's Resistance Army.

Taken together, the findings demonstrate that the species are worth more alive than dead. Ending the killing and protecting elephants makes monetary sense. Worldwide, a single living elephant drives tens of thousands of dollars in tourism-related revenues. Alive, they benefit local communities and economies; dead they benefit criminal and even terrorist groups.

Given the overlap of ivory poaching locations and elephant tourism operations, every elephant killed makes these regions much less profitable. As a result of the findings, iworry recommends:

- An immediate end to all sales of ivory
- Greater funding for Anti-Poaching operations; boots on the ground
- Education in communities from which poachers are drawn as to the value elephants could bring to them in the long term
- Ensure tourism initiatives and projects give tangible benefits to communities
- Enhancing campaigns in ivory consumer countries to inform the public about the true cost of ivory.

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# THE YEAR SO FAR...

# JAN-AUG 2014



**43**  
seizures

TRAFFICKED  
**IVORY**



**17.8**  
tonnes

**IVORY**  
SEIZED



**1,940**



**17.8**  
tonnes

ELEPHANTS **KILLED TO PRODUCE** IVORY

VALUE OF ELEPHANT over its lifetime to tourism

**\$1,607,624.83**

Average raw VALUE OF IVORY an elephant carries

**\$21,000**



**76x**

**MORE VALUABLE**  
is an elephant alive than dead



**10%**

of **CONTRABAND** is usually seized



**90%**

**ILLEGAL IVORY**  
benefitting terrorist and criminal groups

up to

**19,400**

elephants killed  
this year so far







# IVORY

## a popular product

Ivory has long been prized in cultures across the world but since 1989, it has been illegal to trade internationally in ivory. Two exceptions to this ban have since occurred; in 1999, Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe were allowed a 'one off sale' of ivory to Japan and in 2002, and a further 'one off sale' to China and Japan was approved, which took place in 2008.

Prior to the 'one-off' sales, the ban was initially successful in halting the elephant killing of the 1980's and combined with declining popularity among Western countries throughout the 20th century, meant the price of ivory slumped and poaching rates fell dramatically. By comparison,

as a result of the sales to China, demand has been stimulated and a market has been created in which illegal poached ivory can be laundered, thus boosting domestic demand for ivory products. Combined with China's growing middle class who can afford endangered wildlife products such as ivory, the result has been a soar in demand.

Two types of elephant exist in Africa, the Forest Elephant and the Savannah Elephant; both are poached for their ivory. Research by Save The Elephants found that in 2014, uncarved ivory was worth \$2,100 per kilo in China, three times its value in 2010.





17.8 TONNES  
OF IVORY  
SEIZED  
THIS YEAR

## seizures and terrorism

The illegal wildlife trade, which includes the illegal trade in ivory, is estimated to be worth \$15–20 billion annually and is the fourth most lucrative illegal activity behind arms, drugs and human trafficking.

Between January and August 2014, 43 seizures of ivory were reported or more than one a week. The combined weight of the seizures amounts to more than 17.779 tonnes (17.8 tonnes), or approximately 1,940 elephants slaughtered for their tusks.

Of the reported ivory seized: 10 seizures were in Kenya, five were in Gabon, five were in Vietnam and four were in China (including Hong Kong). Whilst this is significantly less than the 50 tonnes of ivory seized globally in 2013, it cannot be seen

as indicating poaching rates have diminished. Changing shipping routes, ports, reduction in a region's rule of law and reporting can all impact seizure rates.

It is widely known that corrupt officials, criminal groups and even terrorist groups are involved in the illegal trade in ivory. Using current estimates, the value of the seized ivory in 2014 amounts to \$37,378,509.

Yet, it is estimated that a seizure rate of 10% in a developed country is considered "good" for general goods contraband – which includes ivory. This suggests that so far this year, an estimated 177,993kg (178 tonnes) of ivory has been illegally trafficked representing 19,400 elephants killed.



# TOURISM

## an Economic Alternative

The current population of elephants in Africa is unknown but estimates place the figure at between 300,000 and 400,000. As a species, elephants do not reach sexual maturity until at least 11 years old, live until 70 on average and reproduce slowly meaning at the current rate of slaughter, they will be wiped out within our lifetime.

As one of Africa's famous Big Five, elephants are a significant source of revenue for the tourism industry. In Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia and South Africa elephants are now an important part of the regional and national tourism industry, driving multi-million dollar revenue streams. Elephant viewing camps, safaris and photo-tours are all based around the thrilling experience of viewing wild elephants. When viewed through a non-consumptive lens (tourism), alive a single elephant can contribute \$22,966 to tourism per year and because elephants live for multiple decades, the total revenue that each elephant can generate during its lifespan is immense - \$1,607,624.83.

By comparison, an elephant carries an estimated two 5kg tusks or a total of 10kg (a conservative estimate). Dead, an elephant is worth an estimated \$21,000. Alive, an elephant is worth 76 times as much.

As a key stone species, elephants shape their environment with species and animals within the ecosystem dependent on elephants for their own survival. Grazing the world's forests

and savannahs, elephants generate vast sums of renewable cash for the local economy in the process.

Regionally, Kenya and Gabon account for the most seizures within Africa. Though tourism in Gabon remains largely underdeveloped, in Kenya elephants and wildlife tourism alone generates 12% of the Gross Domestic Product and creates over 300,000 jobs.

In fact Kenya is well established as a destination to view wildlife, raising Kshs' 4,216,756,000 in National Park entrance fees in 2012 (around \$47,657,000). Home to Africa's 'Big Five', elephant herds alongside rhino and buffalo draw hundreds of thousands of tourists each year. For instance, Tsavo East National Park, home to Kenya's single largest population of elephants accounts for over 20% of average annual visitation into Kenya Wildlife Service National Parks with other parks including Amboseli National Park and Samburu National Reserve home to world famous herds.

The slaughter of over 1,940 elephants so far this year to furnish the illegal trade in ivory represents \$44,554,844 lost to tourism. This pales in comparison to the potential \$445,548,444 lost to tourism if we take into account a 10% seizure rate - which is a standard among developed countries. Further loss of elephants only increases this figure and makes these regions less profitable.

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alive a single  
elephant can  
contribute  
\$22,966 to  
tourism per year





IVORY SEIZURES	DATE OF SEIZURE	IVORY SEIZED	WEIGHT (KG)	NUMBER OF ELEPHANTS KILLED PER SEIZURE	COUNTRY OF SEIZURE
	January	34kg	34.00	3.4	Gabon
	January	2 tusks	not known	1	Gabon
	January	1.8 tonnes	1,800.00	180	Singapore
	01-Jan-14	81 tusks	not known	40.5	Tanzania
	08-Jan-14	35 tusks	275.00	17.5	China
	10-Jan-14	34kg	34.00	3.4	Gabon
	14-Jan-14	14kg	14.00	1.4	China
	16-Jan-14	5kg	5.00	0.5	Kenya
	18-Jan-14	3.4kg	3.40	0.34	Kenya
	29-Jan-14 23-Jan-14	3.815 tonnes	3,815.00	381.5	Togo
	30-Jan-14	120kg	120.00	12	China
	February	95.82kg	95.82	9.582	China
	February	4.2kg	4.20	0.42	Vietnam
	08-Feb-14	143kg	143.00	14.3	Cameroon
	14-Feb-14	0.68 kg	0.68	0.068	Kenya
	16-Feb-14	79.5kg	79.50	7.95	Cambodia
	06-Mar-14	36 tusks	170.00	18	Cameroon
	21-Mar-14	77 pieces	263.00	26.3	Cambodia
	27-Mar-14	106 pieces of raw ivory tusks	1,000.00	100	Singapore
	04-Apr-14	7 tusks	50.00	3.5	Gabon
	07-Apr-14	48kg	48.00	4.8	Kenya
	01-May-14	0.092kg	0.09	0.0092	Zimbabwe
	09-May-14	3 tonnes	3,000.00	300	Cambodia
	24-May-14	1266kg	1,266.00	126.6	Vietnam
	05-Jun-14	2152 kg	2,152.00	215.2	Kenya
	08-Jun-14	125kg	124.00	12.4	Togo
	10-Jun-14	790kg	790.00	79	Ethiopia
	18-Jun-14	700kg	700.00	70	Togo



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# IVORY SEIZURES

DATE OF SEIZURE	IVORY SEIZED	WEIGHT (KG)	NUMBER OF ELEPHANTS KILLED PER SEIZURE	COUNTRY OF SEIZURE
22-Jun-14	90Kg	90.00	9	Vietnam
28-Jun-14	6 tusks	not known	3	Namibia
July	4 spikes	14.00	1.4	Gabon
25-Jul-14	260kg	260.00	26	Kenya
28-Jul-14	18 tusks	46.00	9	Thailand
31-Jul-14	9 tusks	84.00	4.5	Kenya
01-Aug-14	14.6 kg	14.60	1.46	Vietnam
04-Aug-14	5 tusks	12.00	1.2	Kenya
04-Aug-14	84kg	84.00	8.4	Kenya
12-Aug-14	4 tusks	30.00	2	Benin
15-Aug-14	30kg	30.00	3	Benin
17-Aug-14	1000kg	1,000.00	100	Vietnam
18-Aug-14	62kg including 2 tusks	62.00	6.2	Kenya
12-Aug-14	30kg	30	3	Benin
22-Aug-14	56kg	56	5.6	Benin
		Total:17799.29	Total:1940.0292	





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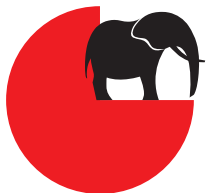
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