

SHORT FACT SHEET—ZIMBABWE ELEPHANT MANAGEMENT (updated October 2020)

Zimbabwe maintains the second-largest elephant population in the world, which has grown from under 4,000 in 1900 to between 76,000 and 93,000 in 2014.¹ This is larger than the elephant populations of West and Central Africa combined and it the approximate size of all of Eastern Africa populations.²

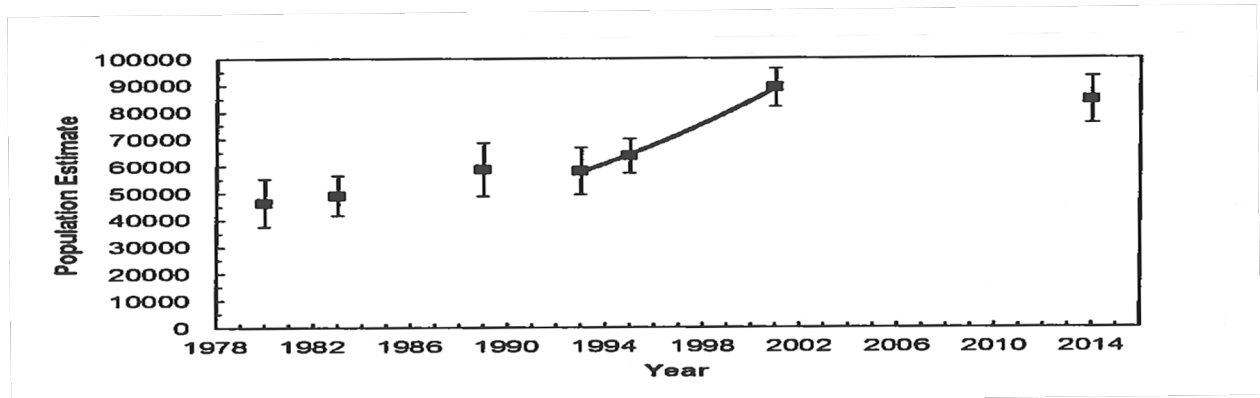


Figure 1: Temporal changes in the estimated elephant numbers in Zimbabwe 1980-2014³

- Zimbabwe’s elephant population is almost 20% larger than in 1997, when it was downlisted to Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) and the FWS first made a positive enhancement finding to allow the import of elephant trophies.⁴ Zimbabwe’s elephant population is stable over the last 15 years, despite rapid growth of the country’s human population, which increased by 24.33% between 2000 and 2016.⁵
- Hunting offtakes are a fraction of a percent and have no biological impact on the overall elephant population (i.e., do not cause population declines). Average annual offtakes between 2012-2018 were 0.253% of the total population.⁶ Moreover, hunters target older

¹ Dunham, K. M. (2015). National summary of aerial survey results for elephant in Zimbabwe: 2014. Harare, Zimbabwe Parks and Wild Life Management Authority.

² IUCN African Elephant Specialist Group, African Elephant Status Report (2016), <https://www.iucn.org/ssc-groups/mammals/african-elephant-specialist-group>.

³ Showcasing Implementation of Zimbabwe’s National Elephant Management Plan (2015-2020) and its National Action Plan. CITES CoP18 Information Document 32 <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/cop/18/inf/E-CoP18-Inf-032.pdf>

⁴ This annotation is for “the exclusive purposes of allowing ... trade in hunting trophies,” among other things. Zimbabwe’s elephant population has grown from 66,000 to approximately 83,000. See Zimbabwe’s downlisting proposal, <https://www.cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/cop/10/prop/E-CoP10-P-27.pdf>.

⁵ 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>.

⁶ See Note 4

bull elephant that have already reproduced and spread their genes. Removal of older bulls tends to increase population growth rates.⁷

- Zimbabwe's wildlife authority, the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZPWMA), is a "parastatal" thus self-funded.
- Hunting areas in Zimbabwe (96,280 km²) are over three times the size of the national parks or strictly protected areas (30,890 km²).⁸ The elephant habitat 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.⁹ Communal (CAMPFIRE) Areas (90%) and private conservancies are almost wholly funded by hunting revenues.
- 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.¹⁰
- Poaching in Zimbabwe has generally been kept under control so as not to have a national effect. Hunting operators support this successful control of poaching by funding their own patrol teams, paying salaries for community scouts, and assisting ZPWMA with equipment, rations, petrol, etc. Hunting operators are the first line of defense against poaching. For example, a sample of 15 operators spent approximately \$1.32 million in 2015 to protect an area exceeding 28,000 km².¹¹ One operator, Charlton McCallum Safaris in the Dande/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.¹²

⁷ ZPWMA (April 2014, July 2015); R.B Martin, Background Study (Apr. 2005).

⁸ Enhancement and Non-Detrimental Findings for *Panthera leo* in Zimbabwe, ZPWMA, October 2016 - CAMPFIRE Association, The Role of Trophy Hunting of Elephant in Support of the Zimbabwe CAMPFIRE Program. December 2016 - Desktop Review of the Communal Areas Management Program for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE) and other Community-Based Natural Resource Management Models in the Region. Ministry of Environment Water & Climate. Government of Zimbabwe (2017).

⁹ UN Protected Planet, <https://protectedplanet.net>; CAMPFIRE Association of Zimbabwe Press Statement (November 2017), <http://campfirezimbabwe.org/index.php/news-spotlight/26-press-stateme...1>. Elephant habitat in Zimbabwe also includes over 10,000 km² in Forest Areas managed by the parastatal Forestry Commission.

¹⁰ 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).

¹¹ ZPWMA (October 2016).

¹² Dande Anti-Poaching Unit Website, <http://dapuzim.com/>.

- Regulated hunting also reduces poaching by incentivizing greater tolerance in rural communities who share their land with dangerous elephant. 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 (65-70% of the total on average). Most elephant are hunted in CAMPFIRE Areas (55 compared 49 in government areas in 2014).¹³
- Revenues from regulated hunting are invested in game monitoring and community projects like boreholes, classrooms, clinics, food, 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 killing are lower. This tolerance exists even though elephant destroyed over 7,000 hectares of crops and claimed the lives of approximately 50 people in CAMPFIRE communities between 2010 and 2015.¹⁴
- 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 2011.¹⁵ Furthermore the analysis of law enforcement efforts in the period 2016-2019 show that poaching is under control in Zimbabwe¹⁶.
- Zimbabwe's National Elephant Management Plan (2015-2020) is the most up-to-date plan in Africa. The national plan is supplemented by four regional action plans with the same framework to address the unique challenges of each range. The latest implementation report documents Zimbabwe's successful elephant management¹⁷. The National Elephant Management Plan is now being updated for the next 5 years period and should be finalized and approved by the end of 2020.

¹³ ZPWMA (July 2015).

¹⁴ CAMPFIRE Association Press Statement, <http://campfirezimbabwe.org/index.php/news-spotlight/26-press-statemente...1>; CAMPFIRE Association (April 2014).

¹⁵ CITES/MIKE Website, https://www.cites.org/eng/prog/mike/data_and_reports.

¹⁶ See note 4.

¹⁷ See note 4.