



Elephant  
Crisis  
Fund

# CELEBRATING 10 YEARS

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2013-2023



# Transforming the Outlook for Elephants

In a time of great challenges such as those we face today, it's good to remember that success is possible. Ten years ago, we launched the Elephant Crisis Fund (ECF) to tackle the existential threat to elephants from ivory poaching. This year, we're celebrating the extraordinary story of how global collaboration – including with yourself – managed to transform the outlook for elephants.

It is with pleasure that we present you with this special report to mark the end of 2023. You'll get an inside look at the projects you've helped make happen to save Africa's elephants over the last decade. You'll also glimpse the opportunities that exist for their future, and that of some of our planet's most spectacular and biodiverse landscapes.

From the extraordinary resurgence of protected areas like Garamba in the Republic of Congo and Zakouma in Chad, that were on the edge of losing their elephants, to the undercover investigations that brought ivory trafficking kingpins to finally face justice, these are inspiring tales. So too is the methodical science, international diplomacy, and celebrity star power that combined to transform policy towards trade in ivory, in China and beyond.



Charles (centre) and Iain (right), with model and actress Isabella Rossellini (left) in Samburu, Kenya

It is of course impossible to fully describe the impact of the 453 grants we've made in these few pages, but we hope that this brief description will give you an idea of the transformations that you have helped to achieve.

Today, we have a window of opportunity to protect the parks and corridors that will be the foundations of the future for elephants and all Africa's wildlife. Achieving peaceful coexistence between humans and elephants is possible, but only if we act fast.

Together we succeeded before, and we can do it again. Thank you for all you are doing to secure a future for elephants.

With gratitude and best wishes,

**Iain Douglas-Hamilton**  
Founder  
Save the Elephants

**Charles Knowles**  
President and Co-Founder  
Wildlife Conservation Network

I'm immensely proud of all that the ECF has achieved. So many organisations, each with different expertise, experience and geographical focus, united to secure a future for elephants. It is a spectacular example of how powerful collaboration can be.

Iain Douglas-Hamilton





## 10 Years of Impact

When I started managing the Elephant Crisis Fund back in 2014, the Fund was in its infancy. At that time, elephant poaching was rampant across Africa, and our first partners were fully immersed in managing urgent projects dedicated to combating the killing of elephants, the illicit trafficking of ivory, and the insatiable demand for tusks.

It wasn't until the pivotal year of 2015, when China and the United States publicly declared their commitment to banning the ivory trade within their respective nations, that we began to glimpse a ray of hope.

Over the following decade, the world witnessed a profound transformation in the plight of elephants. Throughout this period of change, the Elephant Crisis Fund continued to exert its positive influence.

We threw our weight behind public relations campaigns in China, which played a key role in achieving the ban on ivory sales. We provided financial support for surveys aimed at exposing illegal ivory markets, leading to their shutdown, and we funded the undercover operations that led to the apprehension and conviction of many major ivory traffickers. Consequently, criminals became increasingly cautious about engaging in the ivory trade, and wildlife crimes started being treated with the gravity they deserved.



© Chris Thouless

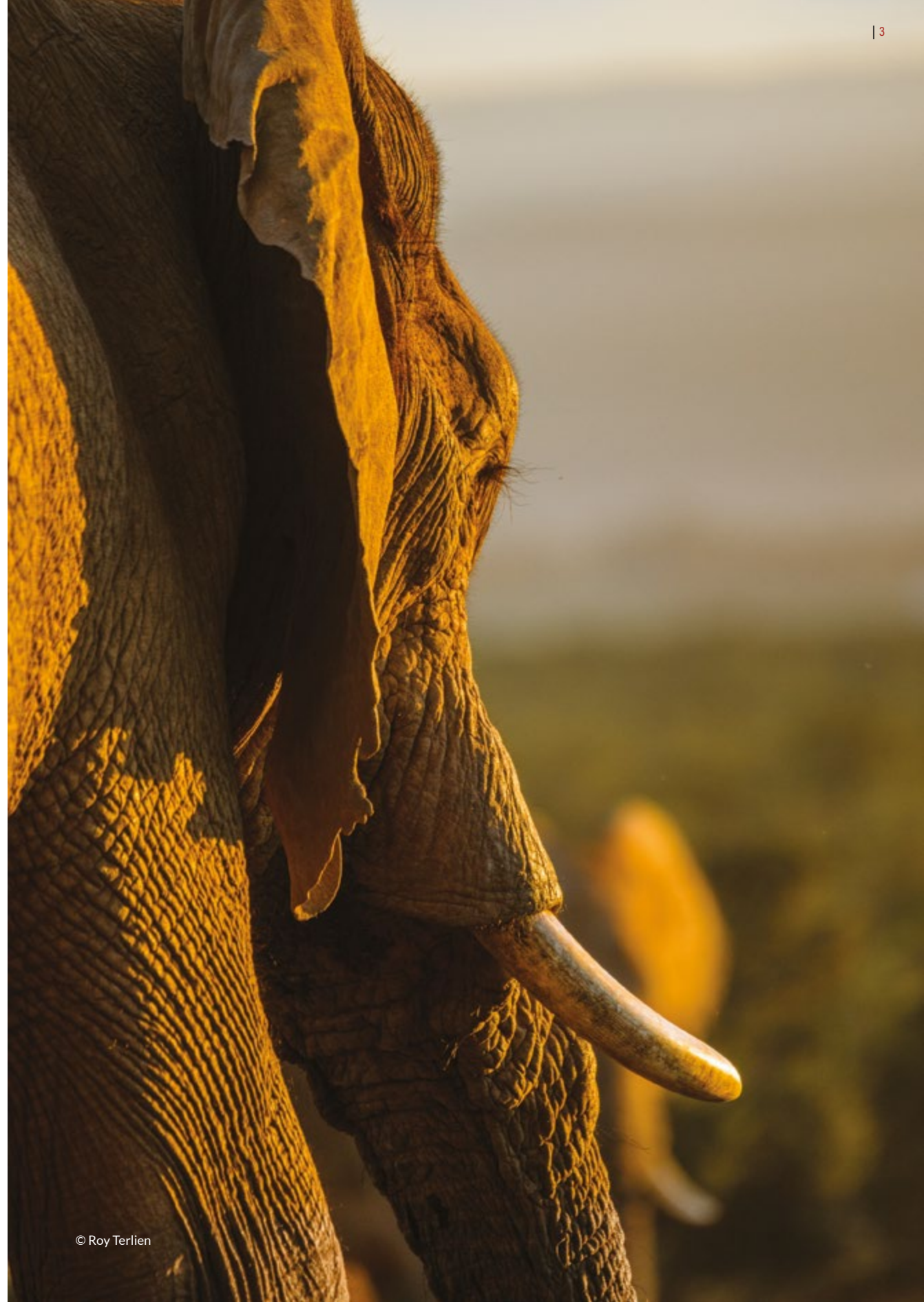
ECF partners rescued several key elephant populations from the brink of extinction. They also succeeded in securing vital protected areas for elephants. Projects designed to promote coexistence between humans and elephants yielded significant results, from protecting key wildlife corridors to creating innovative methods to keep elephants away from villages and farms.

Despite these achievements, it is essential to recognize that elephants are not yet entirely safe from harm, and much work remains to be done. Nonetheless, it has been a great honor to guide the Elephant Crisis Fund through the past ten years.

**None of this would have been possible without the unwavering support of our dedicated donors and supporters, who have stood by us every step of the way. Thank you from the entire ECF team and all of our partners.**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Thouless', with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the signature.

**Chris Thouless**  
Director  
Elephant Crisis Fund



© Roy Terlien



10 YEARS OF GRANTING

# OUR DONORS' IMPACT

100% of funds donated to the ECF go to field partners



© Roy Terlien

The Elephant Crisis Fund (ECF) launched in 2013 and is a joint initiative of Save the Elephants and the Wildlife Conservation Network. It invests in organizations, big and small, around the world, to ensure that elephant populations across Africa are able to thrive without threat from ivory poaching and conflict with humanity.

453

GRANTS  
ISSUED  
TO DATE

111

PARTNERS  
HAVE RECEIVED  
GRANTS

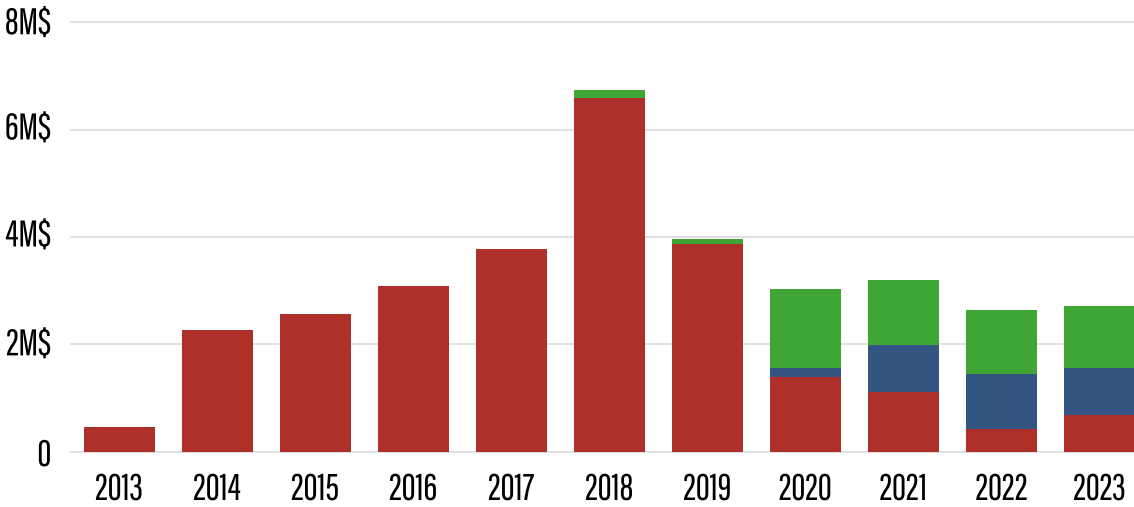
44

COUNTRIES  
WITH  
INVESTMENTS

## The Last 10 Years

Granting amounts per pillar over 10 years

SINCE ITS INCEPTION, THE ECF HAS GRANTED **\$34.4 MILLION**



**IVORY CRISIS**  
\$26.2 MILLION



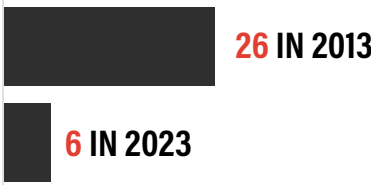
**HUMAN-ELEPHANT  
COEXISTENCE**  
\$2.9 MILLION



**ELEPHANT  
LANDSCAPES**  
\$5.3 MILLION

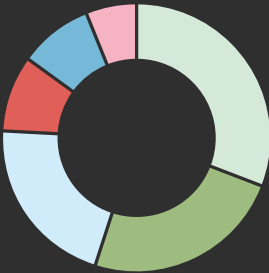


African countries with a significant elephant poaching threat\*



\*Countries in which one or more populations appears to be threatened by poaching, or where we cannot be certain that they are not.

Investment by region



CENTRAL AFRICA 31%  
EAST AFRICA 24%  
SOUTHERN AFRICA 21%  
WEST AFRICA 9%  
ASIA 9%  
MULTIPLE REGIONS 6%

## In 2023

Between January and November 2023, the ECF issued:

39 GRANTS  
TO 30 PARTNERS  
IN 17 COUNTRIES

TOTAL AMOUNT  
GRANTED

**\$2.7 MILLION**

# A DECADE OF PROGRESS

## 2013



ECF launches in response to poaching crisis.  
[Read more: Page 6](#)



## 2015

ECF starts funding undercover investigations of ivory trade.  
[Read more: Page 13](#)

## 2019



Trafficking kingpin Kromah extradited to US.  
[Read more: Page 13](#)



## 2021

Forest elephants recognized as separate species.  
[Read more: Page 17](#)



## 2022

STE Coexistence Toolbox solutions deployed across Africa.  
[Read more: Page 16](#)

## 2014



Focus on ivory demand reduction campaign in China.  
[Read more: Page 10](#)

## 2016

Global 'Knot on my Planet' campaign launches.  
[Read more: Page 8](#)



## 2017 & 2018

China closes its domestic ivory market.  
[Read more: Page 9](#)



## 2020

Human-elephant coexistence an important new focus for ECF.  
[Read more: Page 15](#)



## 2023

Key populations in many areas recovering.  
[Read more: Page 20](#)





# LAUNCH OF THE ECF



Elephants in Tsavo National Park, Kenya. © Frank af Petersens

## — THE AMBITIOUS GOAL OF THE ELEPHANT CRISIS FUND

### An Urgent Need

When the Elephant Crisis Fund first launched in 2013, we had just one goal – to end the ivory crisis. This was ambitious given that Africa's elephants had already endured several years of relentless poaching, and that things only seemed to be getting worse.

At this time, ivory poaching was rampant in Africa. The carcasses of elephants, their tusks hacked from their faces, had become a frequent, sickening sight in elephant habitats across the continent. This poaching was driven by a complex, international ivory trade feeding on poverty, insecurity, organized crime, corruption, and greed. The proliferation of wealth and consumer demand for ivory, notably in China, played a pivotal role in driving this crisis.

Although there were glimmers of hope – for example, an effective anti-poaching response in Kenya – the crisis continued to rage despite the best efforts of individual organizations. **It was clear that without a collaborative and strategic approach to address the situation, the future of African elephants was in peril.** As a result, Save the Elephants (STE) and the Wildlife Conservation Network (WCN) joined forces to create the Elephant Crisis Fund. The ECF provides financial support, as quickly as possible, to carefully chosen partners working at the frontline of elephant conservation. The ECF adopted a three-pillared strategy to address the different and complex stages of the ivory trade: anti-poaching efforts to stop the killing of elephants; anti-trafficking projects to prevent ivory from reaching markets; and efforts to reduce the demand for ivory in end-markets, especially in China.

### THE ECF LAUNCHED WITH JUST ONE GOAL TO END THE IVORY CRISIS



STE and WCN provided world-leading expertise on elephant behavior and conservation, in-depth knowledge of elephant populations across Africa, a network of conservation partners, and access to a strong, supportive donor base. Together, this new approach would be at the heart of collaborative efforts to end the ivory crisis.



**The Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation played an important role during the early years of the ECF, giving a ceremonial launch to the initiative and providing more than \$5.4 million in funding.**



— THE LAUNCH OF THE ECF ALLOWED EMERGENCY ANTI-POACHING INVESTMENTS AT A CRITICAL TIME FOR ELEPHANTS

## Mission to save iconic elephants



Elephants in Dzanga Bai. © Chris Thouless

In the Central African Republic’s Dzanga Sangha protected areas, there is a unique, tropical rainforest clearing called Dzanga Bai, an important research site where over 1,000 forest elephants have been individually recognized. In 2013, armed rebels invaded the area and killed some of these elephants in the hitherto pristine clearing. In one of its first grants, the ECF responded quickly with funding for an emergency deployment of security advisors, who persuaded the rebels to stop before the situation escalated further.



MORE THAN **100,000 ELEPHANTS** WERE KILLED ACROSS AFRICA BETWEEN 2009 AND 2012

— PROTECTING GARAMBA

## Historic Congolese national park is saved from the brink



*The ECF has been an essential partner in providing support to many of our conservation efforts, usually at times when the need for intervention has been urgent.*

Peter Fearnhead,  
Chief Executive Officer, African Parks

2015 proved an exceptionally challenging year for Garamba National Park in the Democratic Republic of Congo, managed by African Parks and one of central Africa’s most important forest elephant sites. Repeated infiltrations by armed groups had resulted in the deaths of many elephants, along with rangers and soldiers.

In one particularly traumatic incident, four rangers were killed by Sudanese poachers and the park’s helicopter was forced down by machine gun fire. The ECF swiftly provided emergency funding to rent a replacement helicopter, marking the beginning of years of ECF support. This funding enabled the resilient African Parks team to establish an intelligence-driven law enforcement program. Since 2016, there has been a massive decline in elephant poaching, and the Garamba intelligence program has become a blueprint for addressing similar challenges in other sites.



Elephants in Garamba National Park. © African Parks / Jean Labuschagne





Artisans in Samburu, Kenya, created beadwork for limited-edition Loewe elephant purses. © Courtesy of Loewe

# SUPPORT FROM THE FASHION WORLD



*We saw an opportunity to use the influential power of the fashion world to put a spotlight on a cause that was close to our hearts. With the transparency of the economic model, the ability to deploy rapid relief in emergency situations, and the ability to support very small to large successful programs and organizations, it allowed us to easily bring in brands and supporters who knew where their money and efforts were going.*

David Bonnouvrier and Trish Goff,  
Knot On My Planet

## FASHION'S FINEST JOIN THE CAUSE

### Linking Hands for Elephants

In 2016, David Bonnouvrier and partner and former model Trish Goff initiated the Knot On My Planet campaign, to forge partnerships with fashion and luxury brands to benefit elephants. Inspired to help elephants and their ecosystems, Bonnouvrier, CEO of DNA Model Management, and Goff decided to repurpose their formidable talents and connections. Their goal was to create a platform that could engage a broad and influential audience to support the Elephant Crisis Fund.

Doutzen Kroes, a Dutch model represented by DNA, was chosen to be the face of Knot On My Planet, and the campaign was launched on social media. Prominent figures in the fashion industry, including Christy Turlington, Naomi Campbell and Linda Evangelista, joined the movement, posting pictures of themselves tying knots. The campaign is a nod to the adage that tying a knot ensures you remember, and that an “elephant never forgets”.



Model Doutzen Kroes knots her shirt for elephants. © Nat Goldenberg



A rose gold and silver brooch from Tiffany's Save the Wild collection. © Courtesy of Tiffany



Loewe elephant purse. © Courtesy of Loewe

To raise funds, Bonnouvrier and Goff approached major luxury brands. In 2016, Tiffany & Co. auctioned a unique, gem-studded elephant brooch, and went on to launch the Save the Wild Collection in 2018. This included a range of elephant-themed gold and silver jewelry, of which 100% of the profits went directly to the Elephant Crisis Fund, amounting to more than \$7.7 million. The campaign also saw a stream of celebrities and influencers such as Doutzen and Chinese actor Liu Haoran visit the elephants of Samburu, in northern Kenya, with Tiffany and Co.

Starting in 2018, luxury Spanish fashion house Loewe led by Creative Director Jonathan Anderson introduced annual limited-edition elephant bags adorned with beadwork crafted by female artisans from Samburu. Holt Renfrew, a Canadian luxury department store, initiated a multifaceted fundraising program including a design collaboration with ethical Canadian brand Kotn.

As of now, the Knot On My Planet campaign, dedicated to anti-poaching and anti-trafficking efforts, has successfully raised over \$14 million for the Elephant Crisis Fund.



# CHINA AND THE IVORY TRADE

Polished ivory tusks on sale in retail outlet. © Lucy Vigne



## THE IMPACT OF CHINA'S GAME-CHANGING DECISION

### The Ivory Ban

Although China's ivory market has a long history, the country's rapid economic growth over the past decades led to an increase in personal wealth and desire for luxury items, including ivory products. Many Chinese consumers were not well informed about the gory realities and devastation of the illegal killing of elephants, and the links with corruption and organized crime.

Since 2013, in response to the growing ivory crisis, ECF grantees have worked to increase awareness of the impacts of buying ivory and to encourage political leaders to put ivory sales bans in place. ECF funding concentrated on establishing the facts - through studies of ivory price data and the levels of illegal killing of elephants in Africa - and using these to influence the political leadership of key countries. In China, the ECF also supported awareness campaigns by celebrities and opinion leaders to reduce consumer demand for ivory.

Ivory market surveys funded by the ECF revealed that the wholesale price of raw tusks skyrocketed between 2010 and 2014, but started to fall in 2015 after China and the US announced their intent to ban the ivory trade within their nations.

Despite pressure from the ivory carving industry, the China ivory ban - which included the sale and processing of ivory products - came into effect at the end of December 2017. This was a pivotal moment in the fight against the ivory trade.

Today, challenges remain, including some continued demand for ivory products within illegal markets in China and neighboring countries. However, the effective closure of what was the largest ivory market, combined with stronger law enforcement efforts in Africa, has led to a substantial decrease in elephant poaching in many parts of Africa.



**CHINA'S DOMESTIC IVORY MARKET BAN WAS A CATALYST FOR CHANGE**



Chinese scientists visit a US Fish and Wildlife Service forensics lab as part of a trip organized by the Natural Resources Defense Council. © Elly Pepper

## ADVOCACY AND ADVICE

### Supporting the ban

Thanks to funding from the ECF, the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) - a US-based non-profit international environmental advocacy group - played a crucial role in providing counsel to the Chinese government from 2013 to 2019. Initially, its efforts were concentrated on urging the government to embrace reforms. As soon as China's commitment to pursuing an ivory ban became evident, the NRDC shifted its focus to advising on how to implement a thorough and efficient ban.



## THE POWER OF CELEBRITY

### Say No To Ivory campaign launches in China

ECF funding to WildAid supported a multi-media campaign in China featuring celebrities including basketballer Yao Ming, movie star Jackie Chan, football icon David Beckham, Prince William, musician Lang Lang, and actress Li Bingbing, which encouraged people to “Say No to Ivory” and stop buying illegal wildlife parts and products. Yao Ming and Li Bing Bing visited Kenya to witness the devastation of poaching first-hand.

In 2014, Yao Ming delivered a petition to the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference asking China’s government to ban sales of ivory. These initiatives gained widespread publicity, reaching millions of people, and helped to shift public opinion and government policy in China.



‘Ivory Free’ display, featuring Prince William, at shopping center in China. © WildAid

# #SayNoToIvory

Became one of the fastest growing social media topics in China in four years



An ivory trinket outlet in Vientiane, Laos. © Lucy Vigne

## IMPORTANT RESEARCH

### ECF funds ivory trade investigations

Between 2014 and 2017, Kenya-based ivory trade experts Lucy Vigne and the late Esmond Bradley Martin undertook six ECF-funded investigations in China, Hong Kong, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar, and the Philippines. This important research to quantify the scale of ivory markets in these countries was published in a series of reports that influenced governments and policymakers ahead of the domestic ivory trade bans in China in December 2017 and Hong Kong in December 2021.

## ON THE FRONT LINE

### Hong Kong’s strongest elephant advocate visits Kenya



Elizabeth Quat by the carcass of a poached elephant killed for ivory in Samburu, Kenya. © Alex Hofford

In 2014, the ECF invited Hong Kong legislator, Elizabeth Quat, to Samburu National Reserve in Kenya - home of Save the Elephants’ research camp - to learn about the ivory crisis first-hand. This visit gained significant press coverage and Quat was able to share her experiences with her supporters. She subsequently became the strongest advocate for elephants in Hong Kong’s Legislative Council and led the push for the domestic ivory trade ban to be passed into law. Save the Elephants named one of their study elephants after her.

## MARKET CLOSURES

### Series of ivory bans in Asia

ECF grantees were key players in ivory bans in other places in Asia, including Hong Kong, Laos, Vietnam and Singapore. They achieved this by raising awareness, lobbying for change, and supporting government agencies to enforce the bans. Every market closure removed a potential loophole for illegal ivory to enter a legal market.



Save the Elephants’ Chris Leadismo supporting the ivory ban campaign in Hong Kong in 2017. © Alex Hofford



# ANTI-POACHING AND LANDSCAPE PROTECTION

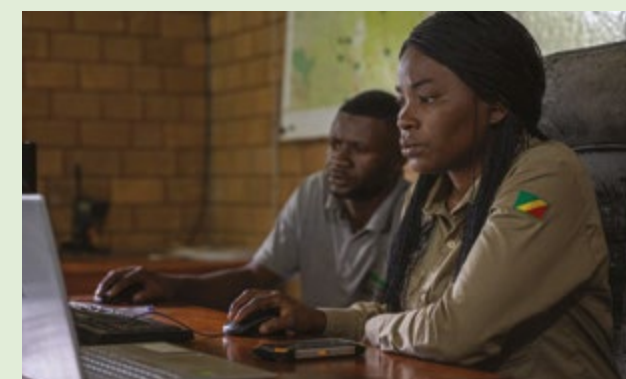
## — ELEPHANT POPULATIONS BEGIN TO RECOVER FROM POACHING

### A Gradual Healing

By 2018, while heavy poaching still continued in some areas, there were encouraging signs of a decline and by the end of 2019, it was clear that poaching had reduced in most of southern and eastern Africa.

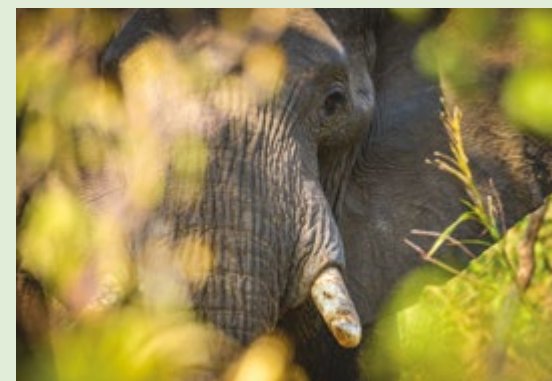
ECF anti-poaching investments focused on giving law enforcement teams in protected areas the skills and equipment needed to keep their elephants safe. Funding was used to train and equip rangers, improve road access and infrastructure, purchase vehicles, boats, planes and communication systems, support the establishment of rapid reaction units, and enable elephant collaring and radio tracking. Intelligence work was used to head off local and regional poaching threats. This enhanced law enforcement kept poachers at bay in many key elephant sites.

The long-term survival of elephant populations across Africa depends on maintaining enough undisturbed areas for them to live in safety, particularly in national parks and other protected areas. Even as the poaching threat wanes, the ECF continues to support partners working to safeguard important elephant landscapes, to allow elephant populations to recover enough to play their role as a keystone species.



Operators monitor the movements of field-teams and wildlife from the Control Room in Odzala-Kokoua National Park, Congo. © Irene Galera / African Parks

**THE ECF HAS INVESTED  
IN 31 OF THE 37 COUNTRIES  
IN AFRICA WITH ELEPHANTS.**



© Wildlife Action Group

### Tribute to lost heroes

Ensuring a future for elephants often carries a hefty price. During the 10 years of the ECF we have witnessed the tragic loss of many brave individuals. On our tenth anniversary, we pay tribute to the rangers and conservationists who have sacrificed their lives in the line of duty and express our gratitude for their unwavering dedication and commitment.





Upemba National Park's new Bat Hawk ultralight aircraft. © Terry Pappas

— UPEMBA NATIONAL PARK

## Protecting the last remaining savanna elephants in the DRC

Mai Mai rebels are present in the area and direct route to the main elephant site in Upemba National Park - home to the last remaining savanna elephants in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Depending on security conditions, to avoid possible threats, Upemba teams have to undertake a roundabout, two day journey from their headquarters to reach the elephants.

With funding from a particularly generous donor, this year the ECF has been able to support Forgotten Parks Foundation's formidable team, which has managed Upemba since 2017, with a Bat Hawk ultralight aircraft. This will give rangers greater visibility over areas around where they are operating, and allow for faster medical evacuation. The ECF is also funding equipment and vehicles to allow Forgotten Parks to expand operations in the elephant range. With these additional resources, patrol teams will be able to reach these vulnerable elephants more easily.



Elephants in Upemba National Park. © Chris Thouless



*The support of the ECF has been critical for the survival of our operations as well as for the protection of our elephants.*

Tina Lain  
Director of Upemba National Park



Zakouma's elephants. © Chris Thouless

— A REMARKABLE RECOVERY

## Zakouma: An impressive conservation success

In Chad's oldest national park, Zakouma, the elephant population plummeted from around 5,000 in 2002 to a mere 450 by 2010. The traumatized remaining elephants congregated in a single, protective group, and under these stressful conditions all breeding stopped. However, thanks to enhanced protection from African Parks rangers, poaching was contained and these elephants had the space and time to recover. Remarkably, 127 calves under the age of five were counted in 2018, a stark contrast to the single calf counted in 2011. Furthermore, there have been no reported cases of elephant poaching since 2016. Zakouma is one of the most impressive conservation success stories in Africa.

— SATELLITE TRACKING COLLARS

## Keeping tabs on elephants

Over the past ten years, the ECF has funded the deployment of many elephant satellite tracking collars to help partners keep tabs on elephants in remote locations, ensure better protection, and to plan for human-elephant coexistence strategies.



A collaring operation in Kafue National Park, Zambia. © Kyle Reid



# ANTI-TRAFFICKING

Notorious wildlife trafficker Moazu Kromah was arrested in Uganda in May 2019 and extradited to the US.

— ECF-FUNDED INVESTIGATIONS SEND CLEAR MESSAGE TO TRAFFICKERS

## Downfall of the Ivory ‘Kingpins’

Bringing high level traffickers or ‘kingpins’ to justice can have repercussions that shake networks to their core. Over the last few years, following long term-investigations often involving ECF grantees, we have witnessed some of these so-called kingpins toppled from their thrones. The ECF has co-funded many of the most impactful investigations leading to convictions.

In May 2023, the fifth member of the notorious ‘Kromah’ network to face justice in the United States, Abdi Hussein Ahmed, a Kenyan citizen, received a custodial sentence in the Southern District of New York. This marked the culmination of extensive collaborative efforts between law enforcement agencies and anti-trafficking partners across multiple African countries and the United States, determined to stop one of the most significant and far-reaching ivory trafficking networks operating in Africa and into Asia. The fact that all five defendants were arrested in African countries and prosecuted in the United States, and received custodial sentences, sent a clear signal that trading in wildlife is no longer a low risk activity.



The U.S. Department of State offered huge rewards for information leading to the arrest and/or conviction of Kenyans Abdi Hussein Ahmed and Badru Abdul Aziz Saleh.



Yunhua Lin leaving a Malawi court in 2021. © Malawi Police

In September 2021, one of southern Africa’s notorious ivory trafficking kingpins, Yunhua Lin, was sentenced to 14 years in prison in Malawi on charges related to rhino horn trafficking and money laundering.

Lin led the ‘Lin-Zhang gang,’ which operated in southern Africa for over a decade, orchestrating significant shipments of ivory and wildlife products to Asia. Several other members of the Lin-Zhang gang, including his wife and son-in-law, were also brought to justice, causing disruption to this network and regional trafficking operations. In October 2023, an appeal by Lin against his sentence was rejected by the High Court in Malawi.



## — SIGNS OF POSITIVE CHANGE

## Nigeria commits to combating wildlife crime



Seizures of ivory and pangolin scales by Nigeria Customs Service.  
© Nigeria Customs Service

Nigeria is known as a major wildlife trafficking hub, acting as a key exit point for ivory and other wildlife products from across Africa to Asia. The trade is facilitated by corruption and poor law enforcement. However, recent developments indicate a commitment by the Nigerian government to bring about positive change.

Law enforcement efforts by Nigerian agencies, particularly the Nigeria Customs Service, supported by conservation partners including ECF grantees Wildlife Justice Commission, Environmental Investigation Agency UK, and Focused Conservation, are paying off. There have been multiple recent arrests and successful convictions of wildlife traffickers, including Vietnamese nationals.

Furthermore, Nigeria's new Endangered Species Conservation and Protection Bill, 2022 expected to be signed into law soon, will strengthen investigative powers and increase penalties for wildlife crime. In another significant move, in October 2023, Nigerian authorities for the first time publicly burnt a large amount of seized wildlife products, demonstrating their commitment to combatting the wildlife trade.

**ACHIEVING ARRESTS AND CONVICTIONS OF HIGHER-LEVEL TRAFFICKERS, WHO MAY NEVER ACTUALLY HANDLE IVORY, IS DIFFICULT.**

## — A KEY TRANSIT HUB

## Vietnam and role in ivory flow to China



Ivory seized at Hai Phong port, Vietnam.  
© Courtesy of 'CustomsNews' E Magazine

Vietnam has been a key transit hub for ivory moving from Africa to China, and the trafficking pathway to Vietnam from Nigeria has been a major recent focus for the ECF.

Vietnam has stepped up its efforts to tackle wildlife crime, with significant seizures made and key players prosecuted over the past few years.

ECF grantee Wildlife Justice Commission reports that the heightened risk of smuggling products into China, and the fear of arrest, is deterring Vietnamese ivory traders. In March 2023, Vietnamese authorities seized seven tonnes of ivory - the largest wildlife product seizure in the country in years.

## — TRAINING AND MONITORING

## Supporting wildlife crime justice

The ECF funds various approaches to combating wildlife crime, including:



Establishing 'vetted' investigation units - with team members highly screened to ensure integrity.



Training customs officials to correctly identify wildlife products.



Advocacy for more robust wildlife legislation.



Monitoring an ivory case in Kenya.



Advising members of the judiciary on wildlife laws and their proper application.



Courtroom monitoring to reduce the chance of corruption.





# HUMAN-ELEPHANT CONFLICT

Elephants and cattle herders in Kenya. © Ryan Wilkie

## — HOW THE ECF HAS RESPONDED TO HUMAN-ELEPHANT CONFLICT

### An Increasing Threat to Elephants

By 2020, the ivory crisis was receding and another threat was looming for elephants: human-elephant conflict. This necessitated prompt and resolute action from the ECF, leading to a redirection of funds toward this new challenge.

Today, human-elephant conflict has become an increasingly serious threat to both elephants and people across the continent. It is a complex and multifaceted issue, but it is primarily driven by the expansion of human settlements and activities into traditional elephant territory. As elephant habitat shrinks in extent and quality, elephants are driven into human-inhabited areas to find resources.

Many low income, rural African communities rely heavily on agriculture for their livelihoods. When an elephant consumes a year's worth of crops in one night, severe economic hardship and stress can result. Moreover, confrontations between elephants and people can lead to casualties on both sides.

The ECF recognizes the urgency of addressing this threat.

**With support from our generous donors, we have invested US\$2.9 million since mid 2020 in a range of projects aimed at addressing and reducing conflict in the short term whilst building the foundations for long-term, sustainable solutions.**

These projects include research into mitigation innovation, education, women and community empowerment, and landscape protection.

The challenges posed by human-elephant conflict are daunting, but with dedication, collaboration, and innovation, there is hope for a future where humans and elephants can coexist peacefully, ensuring the survival of elephants and the well-being of local communities.



A conflict situation developing in Dedza-Salima Forest Reserves in Malawi. © Lynn Clifford/Wildlife Action Group



## THE IMPACT OF URBANIZATION

# Urban elephant conflict on the rise



A herd of elephants in Kariba town, Zimbabwe. © The Zambezi Society

Africa is experiencing an unprecedented wave of urbanization, fundamentally reshaping the continent's geographical landscape. Growing cities and towns are rapidly encroaching on the habitats and corridors that elephants depend on for their survival. In various parts of Africa, including Kenya, Zimbabwe, and Zambia, elephants have been seen pulling roofs off houses, rummaging through garbage dumps, and even breaking into an airport. Such encounters pose significant risks to residents and the elephants themselves.

## KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERTISE

# Women on the frontline of conservation



Beehive fence construction in Malawi. © Wildlife Action Group Malawi

In rural Africa, women possess precious knowledge and expertise about natural resources. Regrettably, women often bear a disproportionate burden of any conflict with elephants and they are often overlooked in conservation efforts and decision making. The ECF is actively addressing this imbalance by elevating women's pivotal role in conservation.

Women are active participants in community workshops and human-elephant conflict mitigation trials, from constructing beehive and chilli fences in Tanzania, Malawi and Zimbabwe to preparing smelly elephant repellent in Zambia and Mozambique. Their success demonstrates that enabling women in rural Africa is not only beneficial for the community but also vital for wildlife protection.

## THE COEXISTENCE TOOLBOX

# Ground-breaking human-elephant coexistence resource

In 2022, the ongoing struggle against human-elephant conflict got a boost in the shape of a pioneering resource from Save the Elephants: the Human-Elephant Coexistence Toolbox.



This comprehensive guide features beautiful illustrations of over 80 different mitigation techniques designed to reduce conflict without causing harm to elephants or people. The Toolbox marks a collaborative and sustainable approach to fostering peaceful coexistence.

With support from the ECF, this manual has been disseminated to trainers, project officers, and community leaders across Africa, enabling them to guide their communities in reducing human-elephant conflict. Many communities have already begun testing the various innovative methods in the Toolbox, from beehive fences to watchtowers and safe food storage techniques. Save the Elephants is also running training sessions at its testing site in Kenya.



Beehive fence training and construction in Mt. Elgon, Kenya. © East African Wildlife Society/Mount Elgon Elephant Project



VR headsets educate students about elephants and coexistence in Zimbabwe. © The Zambezi Society

## REVOLUTIONIZING CONSERVATION

# The future of tech in conservation

From VR headsets, to the BuzzBox™ mimicking the sounds of angry bees, to new electric fence designs, innovative tech has the potential to revolutionize conservation and help address the increasing challenges that human-elephant conflict brings to rural Africa.



# FOREST ELEPHANTS

An elephant in Ivindo National Park, Gabon.  
© Lee White / Agence Nationale des Parcs Nationaux, Gabon

## — PROTECTING THE ELEPHANTS THAT SHAPE AFRICA'S RAINFORESTS

### Protecting Forest Elephants

A major focus of ECF funding in recent years has been the protection of the critically endangered and elusive forest elephant. In 2021, forest elephants were recognized as a separate species from savanna elephants and categorized as critically endangered in the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List.

In some places, such as the Central African Republic and the Republic of Congo, the ECF is supporting partners working to secure major areas of elephant habitat. In other countries, such as Liberia and Senegal, there are tiny elephant populations which may have a chance of survival and recovery if a major effort is put in to understand their status, threats, and to provide effective protection measures.

In some elephant habitats in West Africa, protected area managers need urgent ECF funding to tackle the threat of jihadists who exploit areas with weak governance and limited law enforcement.

In other sites, human-elephant conflict is on the rise in places where conservation support is regrettably scarce, and the Elephant Crisis Fund is funding trials of innovative, forest elephant-specific mitigation techniques.

## — FOREST ELEPHANTS ON THE EDGE

### A spotlight on Angola's persecuted elephants



Collaring of elephants in northwest Angola has advanced the understanding of forest elephant distribution, status, behavior, and threats in the region. © Isilda Cavaleca / Kissama Foundation

The forest in the northwest of Angola is an almost completely overlooked biodiversity hotspot, with no established protected area. It holds a small but important population of forest elephants. These persecuted elephants are at extreme risk due to deforestation and human encroachment, leading to escalating human-elephant conflict, road accidents, and poaching for meat and ivory.

With support from the ECF since 2019, the Kissama Foundation has undertaken a vital mission to better understand and safeguard these elusive elephants under very challenging circumstances. Kissama has evolved the project from confirming the existence of forest elephants to improving understanding of their locations, status, and threats.





A forest elephant enjoying the mud in Odzala-Kokoua National Park, Republic of Congo. © Irene Galera/African Parks





Pendjari rangers on patrol. © Chris Thouless

— DISRUPTING CONSERVATION EFFORTS

## Jihadist threat in West Africa

The escalating jihadist threat in West Africa is a worrying challenge for protected area managers, fueling insecurity and disrupting conservation efforts. Rangers face increased risks, and wildlife trafficking may provide a source of funding for these groups.

In 2022, following multiple attacks in Park W and Pendjari National Park in Benin - both important forest elephant sites - African Parks had to quickly implement an emergency response. ECF funding allowed quick, adaptive solutions such as motorbikes to allow patrol teams to avoid roads booby trapped with improvised explosive devices (IEDs). The Beninese army is working to restore security, while African Parks continues to reinforce its wildlife conservation operations and community development projects.

— LAST SURVIVORS

## Saving relic elephant populations

This precious bull was captured on a camera trap in January this year in West Africa's Guinea Bissau, where forest elephants are on the absolute brink of survival.

The ECF is supporting the Research Centre in Biodiversity and Genetic Resources (CIBIO) to identify the last remaining elephants in this area, through DNA analysis, camera traps, and tracks and signs. This research will be used to help develop an emergency conservation strategy. For tiny populations like this, every elephant death is a critical loss.



A camera trap image of one of the last remaining elephants in Guinea Bissau. © CIBIO



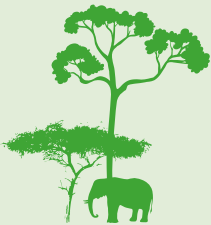
An elephant approaching a human-elephant conflict mitigation electric fence in Odzala-Kokoua National Park. © Irene Galera / African Park

— TESTING MITIGATION METHODS

## Tackling human-elephant conflict in forest elephant environments

Understanding the best ways to mitigate human-elephant conflict in forest elephant environments is a critical need that has long been overlooked. Leveraging the knowledge gained from safeguarding their savanna counterparts, the ECF is partnering with organizations to address this.

In the dense forests of the Odzala-Kokoua National Park in the Republic of Congo, recognized as one of the most extensive human-elephant coexistence trial sites for forest elephants, the ECF is supporting tests to evaluate different styles of deterrent fences and other mitigation methods to keep elephants from entering farmlands.



THE ECF HAS INVESTED MORE THAN **US\$1.3 MILLION** IN ODZALA-KOKOUA SINCE 2016





# LOOKING AHEAD

Wildlife areas across Africa are under pressure from conversion to agriculture and other land uses. © Jeremy Goss/Big Life

## — NEXT STEPS FOR THE ECF

### Securing a Future for Elephants

The challenges facing elephants today are markedly different from those encountered when the ECF first launched ten years ago. Some poaching still occurs, and ivory is being shipped to Asia, but it no longer threatens their survival except in a few places.

This situation may change, depending on such factors as the Chinese commitment to enforcing the ivory ban, and the demand for ivory. However, today and for the foreseeable future, the main threat to elephants is their ever-decreasing natural habitat. This reduction is driven by human expansion into wild spaces, changing land use, and infrastructure development. Climate change will affect these issues and their impact on elephants in ways we can only guess.

A GREAT STRENGTH OF THE ECF IS ITS ABILITY TO **MOVE SWIFTLY** TO ADDRESS THE **EVER-CHANGING PRIORITIES** FOR ELEPHANT CONSERVATION

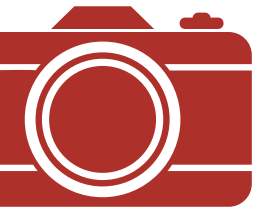
But even in the face of losing these wild landscapes, there is still hope. The ECF and its partners have a clear understanding of what needs to be done and, in partnership with our donors, we can invest in the most effective projects to address this rising threat. The future for elephants hinges primarily on:

- 1 **Safeguarding, and garnering political support for, vast natural habitats capable of sustaining viable elephant populations.**
- 2 **Backing initiatives to mitigate conflict on the borders of human settlements and elephant habitat.**
- 3 **Fostering positive sentiments among local communities toward elephants and other wildlife.**
- 4 **Whenever feasible, establishing connecting pathways between elephant strongholds.**

These are the areas we need to focus on, using the funds and network of partners of the ECF, to explore and develop ways of encouraging coexistence, and maximizing elephant range.

One of the great strengths of the ECF has been its ability to move swiftly to address the ever-changing priorities for elephant conservation. This will become even more important in the future. We aspire for the ECF to continue its role, equipped with the necessary resources to support elephants, irrespective of the challenges they encounter in the evolving world.





# PHOTO COMPETITION

In celebration of a decade of dedicated conservation effort through the ECF, we hosted a photo competition this year, inviting all our grantees to participate. These winning photos are testament to the collective impact we have achieved together over the years.

## Overall winner



**CATEGORY:**  
LANDSCAPE

**PARTNER:**  
BIG LIFE FOUNDATION, KENYA

Poaching used to be a problem in the Chyulu Hills, Kenya, but following years of sustained and dedicated ranger patrols, elephants now feel safe.

© Josh Clay

## Category winners



© David Ward / Focused Conservation Solutions

**CATEGORY:**  
ANTI-TRAFFICKING  
**PARTNER:**  
FOCUSED CONSERVATION  
SOLUTIONS

US Acting Ambassador and Kenya's Directorate of Criminal Investigations announcing the arrests of "Most Wanted Fugitives" Saleh and Ahmed from the Kromah syndicate.



© Mjose Jozie / CSL Zambia

**CATEGORY:**  
HUMAN-ELEPHANT  
COEXISTENCE  
**PARTNER:**  
CONSERVATION SOUTH  
LUANGWA, ZAMBIA

ECF funded elephant-proof grain stores secure vital food supplies and promote greater tolerance for elephants.



© Scott Ramsay / Conservation Lower Zambezi

**CATEGORY:**  
ANTI-POACHING  
**PARTNER:**  
CONSERVATION SOUTH  
LUANGWA, ZAMBIA

An arrest and seizure in Lower Zambezi National Park, Zambia, where Conservation Lower Zambezi collaborates with the Department of National Parks and Wildlife.





# CALL FOR SUPPORT

© Jane Wynyard



The ability to provide aid to ill equipped rangers and underfunded NGOs, in multiple countries where elephants are greatly endangered, with one contribution to the Elephant Crisis Fund, is the reason we've supported the ECF since 2017. Also gratifying is knowing that 100% of every dollar is put to work without administrative deductions.

John Kay & Jutta Maue Kay  
The Maue Kay Foundation

ECF donors since 2017



At the outset of the spike in elephant poaching some years ago, we identified the preservation of this magnificent species as one of our top priorities. As our commitment increased, it became clear that our passion should be matched with professional insight. We found the expert guidance we needed through our partnership with the ECF, and have been happy to relinquish control over individual grants in favor of knowing that our money is being used for the projects most critical to elephant survival.

Helen Lang and Isaiah Orozco

ECF donors since 2015



Not only are elephants a keystone species, with many others dependent upon them, but they are brilliant and empathetic family animals with deep bonds, sticking together sometimes for multiple generations, protecting one another, and mourning their dead. This lifelong commitment to the family unit sets a high relational standard for us all.

Nicole P Wilson,  
M Piuze Foundation

ECF donor since 2014

The Elephant Crisis Fund runs a 100% donation model. Every dollar raised is directly deployed to elephant conservation projects in the most critical hotspots, with zero administrative fees or overhead taken out.

Please help us to support the best ideas by trusted partners to help save one of the greatest icons of the natural world.

## CONTACT

Elephant Crisis Fund  
Email: [info@elephantcrisfund.org](mailto:info@elephantcrisfund.org)  
Website: [elephantcrisfund.org](http://elephantcrisfund.org)

## BANK TRANSFER

For account details, please email us at [donate@wildnet.org](mailto:donate@wildnet.org) and include where you reside. This will enable us to give you the correct bank information.

## CHECKS

Checks should be made out to the payees and sent to the corresponding addresses below. Please include your address for the mailing of tax information.

### \$ (USD) Payable to:

Wildlife Conservation Network  
209 Mississippi St. San Francisco  
CA 94107  
Tax Exempt ID: #30-0108469  
Tel: +1 415-202-6380

### £ (GBP) Payable to:

Save the Elephants  
c/o Gerald Edelman  
73 Cornhill, London EC3V 3QQ  
Registered Charity #1118804  
Tel: +44 (0)207-299-1400

Please indicate that the funds are designated for the **Elephant Crisis Fund**.

## ONLINE

A quick and secure way to give:  
[wildnet.org/ecf](http://wildnet.org/ecf)

## PLANNED GIVING

Leaving a gift in your will is a powerful way to change the world for the better for elephants. After taking care of your loved ones, please consider the Elephant Crisis Fund.

If you're US based, please visit our free legacy planning tool at [freewill.com/wcn](http://freewill.com/wcn) where you can select the Elephant Crisis Fund as a beneficiary.

Email us at [planned\\_giving@wildnet.org](mailto:planned_giving@wildnet.org) if you have questions.

## SOCIALS

 [@elephantcrisfund](https://www.instagram.com/elephantcrisfund)

 [Elephant Crisis Fund](https://www.facebook.com/elephantcrisfund)

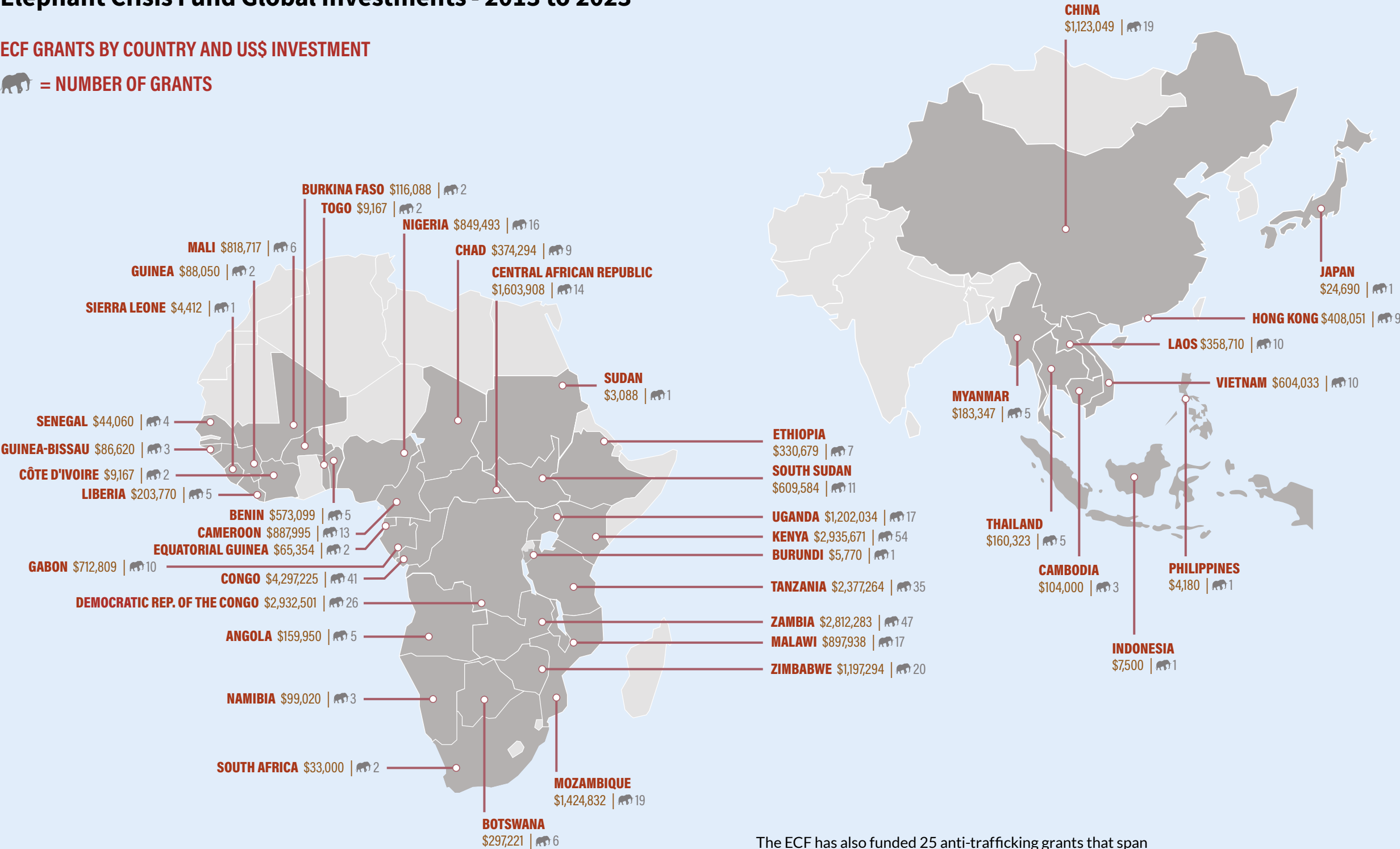
 [@ElephantCrisis](https://twitter.com/ElephantCrisis)



# Elephant Crisis Fund Global Investments - 2013 to 2023

## ECF GRANTS BY COUNTRY AND US\$ INVESTMENT

 = NUMBER OF GRANTS



The ECF has also funded 25 anti-trafficking grants that span regional or multi-regional areas, with support totaling \$3,014,681.

In addition, the ECF has funded three demand reduction grants and one anti-trafficking grant in the USA totaling \$91,649.



Our partners in conservation

Ten years of remarkable progress would be impossible without the ECF’s amazing, dedicated, and passionate partners that we are proud to have in our ECF family. From those we have worked with for ten years, to the newcomers with fresh ideas, these carefully vetted organizations are our core and strength.

Working together towards a common goal of creating a sustainable future for elephants and the people living alongside them, each group is made stronger by the sharing of knowledge and best practices within our partner network.

This network has grown since the ECF was set up with the single focus of stopping the carnage of the ivory trade. Today, our partners also address the growing threat of human-elephant conflict and the urgent need to secure elephant landscapes.

We are constantly in awe of the courageous and innovative people who work for our partner organizations and who know how to best deal with their unique local challenges. We feel honored to be able to continue to support their vital work.

ADM Capital Foundation	Elephant Family	Lilongwe Wildlife Trust	Stop Ivory
Africa Nature Investors Foundation	Elephant Protection Initiative	Lukuru Wildlife Research Foundation	Tashinga Initiative Trust
African Conservation Centre	Elephant Research and Conservation	Maisha Consulting	The WILD Foundation
African Conservation Trust	Elephant Voices	Mara Elephant Project	The Zambezi Society
African Parks	Elephants Alive	Maravi Risk Management	Tikki Hywood Foundation
African People and Wildlife	Elephants for Africa	Mareja Community Conservation Project	TRAFFIC
African Wildlife Foundation	Enjojo Foundation	Matobo Veterinary Centre	Tsavo Trust
Agence Nationale des Parcs Nationaux, Gabon	Environmental Investigation Agency	Mozambique Wildlife Alliance	Uganda Conservation Foundation
Agency for Peace and Development	Fauna & Flora International	Natural Resource Conservation Network	University of Utah IsoForensics
Basel Institute on Governance	Focus Africa	Natural Resources Defense Council	University of Utah
Big Life Foundation	Focused Conservation	Noé	University of Washington
Biocarbon Partners	Forgotten Parks Foundation	Northern Rangelands Trust	White Elephant Safaris
Born Free Foundation	Frankfurt Zoological Society	OI Pejeta Conservancy	Wild Planet Trust
Bristol Zoological Society	Freeland	Oxford Brookes University	Wild Survivors
Centre on Illicit Networks & Transnational Organised Crime	Friends of Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	PAMS Foundation	WildAid
Chengeta Wildlife	Game Rangers International	Panthera France	Wildlife Action Group Malawi
Connected Conservation	Global Wildlife Conservation	Rangelands Regeneration	Wildlife Conservation Global
Conservation Justice	Gorongosa Restoration Project	Research Centre in Biodiversity and Genetic Resources	Wildlife Conservation Society
Conservation Lower Zambezi	Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation	Save-Elephants	Wildlife Crime Prevention
Conservation South Luangwa	International Fund for Animal Welfare	Save the Elephants	Wildlife Justice Commission
Conserve Global	Kenya Wildlife Service	Saving the Survivors	Wildlife Traxx Consultancy
EAGLE Network	Kissama Foundation	SEEJ-Africa	Wildlife Works
East African Wildlife Society	Legal Assistance Centre, Namibia	South Rift Association of Landowners	WildlifeDirect
Ecoexist Trust	Liberty Shared	Southern Tanzania Elephant Project	Working Dogs for Conservation
Education for Nature Vietnam		Space for Giants	World Wildlife Fund
		Stichting Wings for Conservation	Zoological Society of London

Our funders

We would like to thank all our donors and funders who have financially supported the Elephant Crisis Fund over the last 10 years, for your incredible generosity and loyalty. It is your support that has made all our work possible, and we know you share our vision of a future where elephants are no longer under threat. Your trust and partnership as we work towards this together is greatly appreciated.

We would particularly like to thank the following generous funders for donations made between November 2022 and October 2023:

FOUNDERS CIRCLE | \$200,000 AND ABOVE

Nancy P. and Richard K. Robbins Family Foundation  
Save the Elephants

CONSERVATION VISIONARIES | \$100,000 - \$199,999

Beagle Charitable Foundation  
M. Piuze Foundation

Re:wild  
Estate of Barbara E. Schlain

BENEFACTORS | \$20,000 - \$99,999

Berger Family Fund  
Bole-Klingenstein Foundation  
Briar Patch Fund  
Jan Hatzius and Linda Eling Lee  
Loewe  
March Conservation Fund

Martin Fabert Foundation  
Mary S. Boardman Trust  
The Maue Kay Foundation  
Quinn Morgan and Upacala Mapatuna  
Oakland Zoo

The Overbrook Foundation  
John and Nuri Pierce  
Plum Foundation  
Anonymous

AMBASSADORS | \$5,000 - \$19,999

Cynthia Cannnon  
Beverly Chan  
CRW Fund  
Stephanie Druley  
Julie and Thomas Hull  
Joyce Kaneshiro and James Poley

Kellan Wolverton Kilbourne Memorial Fund  
Stephen Lexow  
Norma Mahmood and Robert McKim  
The Nancy M. Morris 2004 Trust  
Anne Pattee

Linda Polishuk  
Stephen Pratt  
Sudie Rakusin  
Victoria Sujata  
Edward and Dara Wood-Prince  
Anonymous (6)

SPONSORS | \$2,000 - \$4,999

Beverly Archer  
Ann Bujas, in memory of Priscilla “Peaches” Curtis, Roko S.V. Bujas, and LeRoy E. Curtis, Jr.  
Bruce and Trish Campbell  
Lisa Climo  
Claire Cressia  
Pat Gilbert  
R. Faye Goodwyn

Dixie Luebcke  
Jeanette Martone  
Melling Family Foundation  
Anne Mize  
Dr. William T. and Dorothy D. Moore Family Charitable Endowment  
Chris and Mary Margaret Ng  
Gail O’Dell  
Gordon R. Ray, MD

Schoelzel Family Foundation  
Bev Spector and Ken Lipson  
Heath Thomson and Nicole Perloth Thomson  
Shirley Woo and David Rosenfeld  
Jocelyn Yonemoto  
Anonymous (2)



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