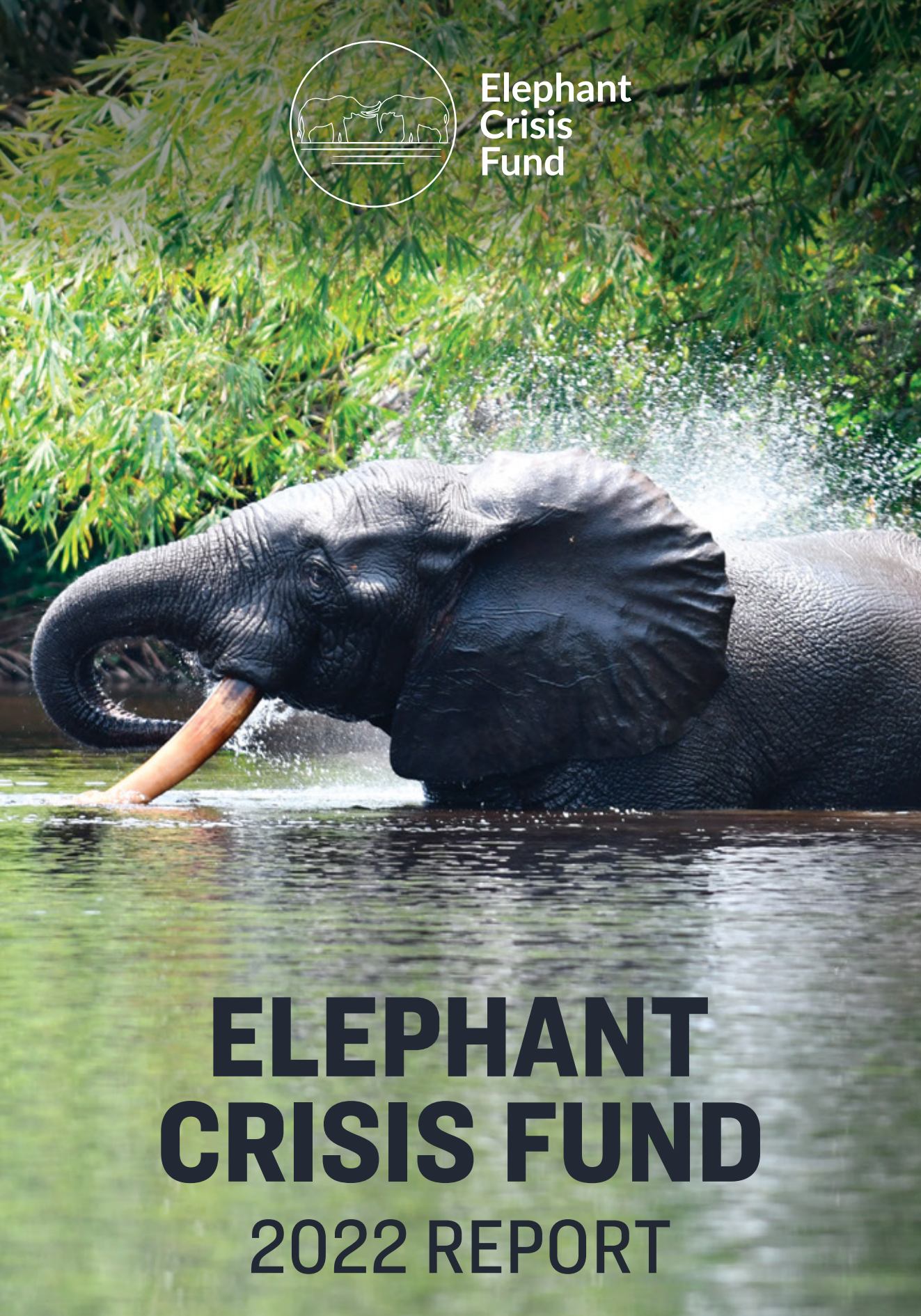


ELEPHANT CRISIS FUND

2022 REPORT



Front cover: Conkouati-Douli National Park in the Republic of Congo, managed by ECF partner Noé, is home to approximately 900 forest elephants. © *Laboureur/Noé.*

This page: Savanna elephants in the Serengeti in Tanzania, where the ECF is supporting human-elephant conflict mitigation work by Frankfurt Zoological Society with communities living near the National Park.
© *Daniel Rosengren/Frankfurt Zoological Society*



Above: A camera trap image of a huge bull living in a small patch of forest in Mont Péko National Park in Côte d'Ivoire. The area had been almost entirely cleared by illegal cocoa farmers but is now protected by the government. *© Ivorien Office of Parks and Reserves (OIPR).*

Below: These two young bulls drew international attention after journeying large distances through fragmented landscapes in West Africa. *© Forestry Development Authority (Liberia) Conservation Department.*



Ghost Elephants and Reduced Poaching

An overview of African elephant conservation in 2022

© Richard Moller/Tsavo Trust.

The state of elephants in Africa continues to generate a mixture of hope and concern. While the threat of poaching is thankfully on the decline, other threats to elephants from habitat loss and human-elephant conflict continue to grow.

Across the continent, we are losing small elephant populations at a distressing rate. In many places, particularly in West Africa there are **tiny populations of 'ghost elephants'** often consisting of fewer than five individuals, too few to have a chance of long-term survival. They are often refugees in their own homelands, moving in secret between small patches of habitat. They are being lost one-by-one to old age, or conflict with people. Sometimes human lives are also lost when there is conflict, particularly in communities that are not familiar with elephants and do not know how to behave around them. Often the last surviving elephants are wily old bulls, able to conceal themselves effectively, but with no chance of finding a mate.

There is, however, no easy solution for 'ghost elephants'. Darting and moving elephants to a secure location has been tried, in Ivory Coast for example, but capturing these elusive individuals is very difficult and there is no guarantee that they will remain wherever they are moved to. The best chance may be for governments to **establish and secure large enough protected areas** in the hope that these wandering elephants will find them and feel safe enough to settle and perhaps breed.



The Omo Forest Reserve, about 80 miles from Lagos, is home to one of the three possibly viable forest elephant populations in Nigeria. *© Nigerian Conservation Foundation/Wild Planet Trust.*

As competition between humans and elephants over space and resources escalates, our partners face a tough uphill battle. Habitat loss and fragmentation are fueling this conflict in many parts of Africa.



In the town of Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe, elephant sightings are becoming increasingly frequent as elephants forage for food in residential areas and dumpsites. © *Ozzy Moyo.*

In conflict hotspots, where elephants are seen as 'problem animals', there is an **urgent need to work fast** to protect these vulnerable elephants. Our network of conservation partners is testing conflict mitigation techniques in communities hardest hit by human-elephant conflict.



ECF partner Wild Survivors is working to protect a critical elephant corridor in Tanzania through community-led projects such as this women's beekeeping group. © *Lucy King/Save the Elephants.*

The **ongoing drought in many parts of Africa** has further exacerbated conflict, as elephants move further from their habitats and into nearby human settlements in search of food and water. The challenge is to develop immediate solutions to reduce conflict, and long-term solutions to ensure coexistence.

Though conflict is rising, there is **better news about elephant poaching**. Elephants are still being killed for ivory across much of their range, but not at a level that threatens their survival—in striking contrast to the situation five to ten years ago, when many elephant populations were suffering drastic reductions. Some worrying poaching incidents have taken place during the last year, but they do not seem to point to a full-blown resurgence of the ivory crisis.



No elephants have been poached in Thuma and Dedza-Salima Forest Reserves in Malawi in recent years thanks to effective law enforcement and community engagement by ECF partner Wildlife Action Group. © *Wildlife Action Group Malawi.*

The continued enforcement of the Chinese sales ban, and the lack of other major end-user markets apart from China, mean that **demand for ivory has remained low**. Additionally, a series of arrests and prosecutions of major ivory traffickers has made criminals shy away from the ivory trade.



Carved ivory items seized at Shenzhen Baoan International Airport, Guangdong Province, China. © *China Customs.*



About the Elephant Crisis Fund

Our work in a changing Africa

© Richard Moller/Tsavo Trust.

The Elephant Crisis Fund (ECF) is a joint initiative of Save the Elephants and the Wildlife Conservation Network, established to invest in organizations which are working to secure a future for elephants in Africa.

The ECF was set up in 2013 to support a network of organizations with funding and technical expertise to help them combat the ivory poaching crisis. With this threat now reduced, the ECF has broadened its scope to improve coexistence between humans and elephants and to protect elephant landscapes.

Savanna and forest elephants are facing intense threats to their survival in many parts of Africa. The ivory trade has reduced in recent years but ivory continues to move from Africa to illegal markets in Asia. Other threats to elephants' survival are becoming more acute, including habitat loss, and a sharp rise in conflict between humans and elephants as they compete with each other for space and resources.

Such clear and present dangers to savanna and forest elephants—two of the most ecologically important and treasured species on Earth—require responses that are rapid, innovative, collaborative, and effective. The ECF promotes and invests in such interventions.

To secure a future for elephants, the ECF supports partners working in three programmatic areas:

- **Ending the ivory crisis:** stopping the killing of elephants for ivory, preventing ivory from reaching markets, and reducing the demand and profitability of the trade in ivory products.
- **Promoting human-elephant coexistence:** reducing conflict between humans and elephants through mitigation measures and land use planning.
- **Protecting elephant landscapes:** safeguarding important elephant landscapes, to allow elephant populations to recover.

One hundred percent of every donation goes directly to elephant conservation programs, with zero funding taken out for overhead. The ECF has strong governance with a board that oversees strategy and a team which conducts deep vetting to ensure funding reaches the most effective projects, and monitors progress to track impact.

In nearly 10 years, the ECF has deployed $31.6 million to some of the best efforts to safeguard the future for elephants. The ECF is working to ensure that elephant populations across Africa are no longer under threat.

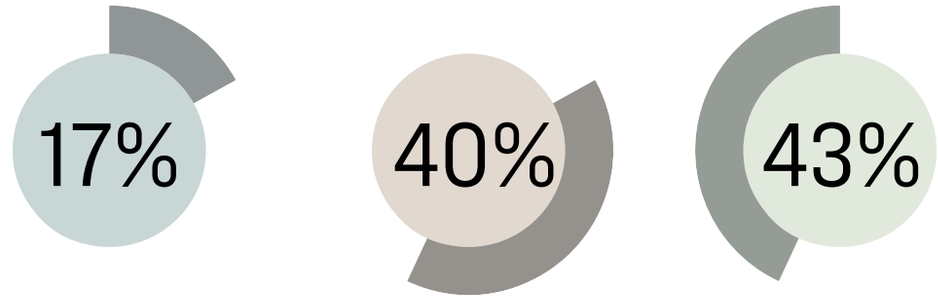
Total funding to date

410
Grants
issued by the ECF

105
Partners
have received grants from the ECF

44
Countries
with ECF investments

% of funding allocated in 2022 to





ivory crisis

human-elephant coexistence

elephant landscapes

$31.6 million
granted to ECF partners since 2013

$2.4 million
granted Jan to Nov 2022

From January to November 2022, the ECF issued 42 grants to 34 partners in 19 countries

Ending The Ivory Crisis

Poaching no longer the biggest threat to elephants

© Zanne Labuschagne/WCS.

Thanks to the efforts of many, the reduction in the ivory crisis over the last five years has been a **significant, but still fragile, success**. Ten years ago, it would have been difficult to imagine the world as it is today— one in which most of the major ivory trafficking networks have been so severely disrupted that traffickers are unwilling to take the risk of dealing in ivory, and where Chinese law enforcement agencies are carrying out their own sophisticated investigations into trafficking networks and diligently following up on leads provided to them by international NGOs. These changes are tremendously positive for elephants.

Five years ago, ivory poaching was the biggest threat to elephant populations in almost every African country; now we believe it is not the biggest threat in *any* country. Unfortunately, this is not just a result of the reduction in poaching, but also an indication of the increase in habitat loss and human-elephant conflict. Nonetheless, we are on an **upwards path towards stamping out poaching** across the continent as people unite to stop poaching, trafficking, and the demand for ivory.

FIVE YEARS AGO, IVORY POACHING WAS THE BIGGEST THREAT TO ELEPHANT POPULATIONS IN ALMOST EVERY AFRICAN COUNTRY; NOW WE BELIEVE IT IS NOT THE BIGGEST THREAT IN *ANY* COUNTRY.

This year has seen some **major successes** in the fight against the illegal ivory trade, many funded by the ECF and resulting in the downfall of key wildlife traffickers.

The Wildlife Justice Commission (WJC) has assisted the Nigerian Customs Service with an investigation into a **key Vietnamese gang**, followed by significant arrests and prosecutions. In July, WJC supported Mozambique authorities with the arrest of Simon Valoyi, also known as Navara, a notorious suspected trafficker and murderer.

ECF granting for ending the ivory crisis in 2022

$418,000

7 grants to 6 partners in 4 countries

The Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) has played a supporting role in the conviction of the notorious Lin trafficking network in Malawi. In a separate development, Malaysian national Teo Boon Ching, believed to be the main player at the Asian end of the Kromah network, a **wildlife trafficking network spanning Asia and Africa** for many years, was arrested in Bangkok in June by Thai Police and extradited to the U.S. in October. He had been known to authorities for some time—details of his criminal activities were shared with the relevant authorities and subsequently documented in a report published by the EIA in 2018—but until this year, had managed to evade justice.



Teo Boon Ching photographed during undercover operations in Vietnam. *© Environmental Investigation Agency.*

Five members of the Kromah network, who were indicted by the Southern District of New York in June 2019, have now all been arrested and extradited to New York. The last two were arrested in Kenya in May and August thanks to **million-dollar rewards** offered by the U.S. State Department. Kromah himself pled guilty and in August was given a five-year sentence. Some people expressed concern at such a low sentence compared to, for example, an individual in Uganda who was given a life sentence for being in possession of two tusks. However, it is the probability of a conviction and the actual serving of the sentence that sends the most important message to criminals. There is a fear that if relatively minor wildlife criminals are given sentences at the same level as major crimes against people's lives, there will be a backlash from local people, concerned that their governments care more for wildlife than people.



Left: 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.



Below: Badru Abdul Aziz Saleh photographed during his extradition from Kenya to the U.S. in June 2022. *© The Directorate of Criminal Investigations, Kenya.*

Opposite page: As in many other countries in Africa, Kenya's elephants are currently facing less of a threat from poaching than in previous years. *© Richard Moller/Tsavo Trust.*

Promoting Human-Elephant Coexistence

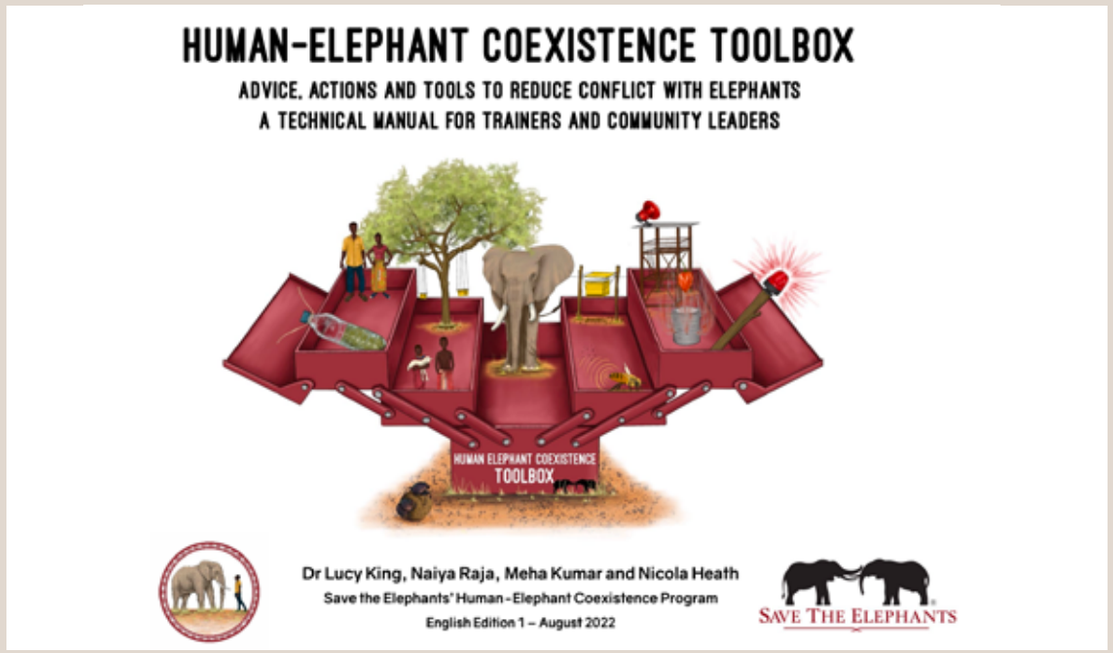
Mitigation methods bring hope

© Wildlife Action Group Malawi.

Tackling human-elephant conflict (HEC) across Africa is a complex challenge. The issue of such large animals living alongside people with the lowest socio-economic opportunities in Africa, is wrapped up in post-COVID geopolitics and the global rising cost of living. While there is unquestionably a focus by the ECF to find **sustainable long-term solutions** to HEC, there is also a very real, urgent need to alleviate the immediate suffering of rural communities that live side-by-side with elephants.

ALLEVIATING THE SUFFERING OF RURAL COMMUNITIES THAT LIVE ALONGSIDE ELEPHANTS REQUIRES URGENT ATTENTION.

In 2022, in response to this challenge, Save the Elephants proudly published a beautifully illustrated and comprehensive manual (available in digital and print) of **more than 80 tried and tested elephant deterrent methods** designed to help rural communities in Africa coexist with elephants. The extensive digital resource is housed on a new web platform (www.ste-coexistence-toolbox.info), is open-source, free to use and is available in English, Kiswahili and French. With ECF funding, some of the techniques from the manual are being trialed by our network of partners with promising results across a wide range of varying habitats.



The front cover of Save the Elephants' illustrated Human-Elephant Coexistence Toolbox. *Illustration: Nicola Heath/Save the Elephants.*

Although mitigation of conflict through innovative solutions is much needed at the household level, we have also made significant investments in 2022 to protect critical elephant corridors in Tanzania, Botswana, Mozambique, and Kenya. In Tanzania, we have invested in a one-of-a-kind corridor protection project to **safeguard a threatened elephant movement route** between the Selous Ecosystem and the forested Udzungwa Mountains. The project will restore the 150m wide, 12 km long Kilombero Elephant Corridor by compensating 260 farmers for giving up small sections of their farmland for the corridor. The funds were channeled directly to the farmers and no families were displaced by this project. Protecting this corridor means that elephants will be able to move safely without risk of conflict with farmers.



Tanzania's first elephant underpass, in the Kilombero Elephant Corridor. *© Southern Tanzania Elephant Program.*

The ECF has also made coexistence funding investments to protect critically endangered forest elephant populations in West and Central Africa. In Odzala-Kokoua National Park in the Republic of Congo, we have invested in the research and testing of **farmer-managed elephant deterrents** such as beehives, strobe lights, chili fabric fences, and vuvuzela horns.



Installing a chili fabric fence on the boundary of Odzala-Kokoua National Park, Republic of Congo. *© Elistin Koussafoula.*



A camera trap image of a forest elephant in Monte Alén National Park, Equatorial Guinea's largest protected area. © *Bristol Zoological Society.*

In Equatorial Guinea, we have funded the installation of organic elephant repellent fences on farms at the boundary of Monte Alén National Park to keep elephants away from peoples' crops. This trial, run by Bristol Zoological Society, will help us understand if this new HEC mitigation method, previously only tested in savanna conditions, can be adapted to **help communities living alongside forest elephants**.

In Gabon, Africa's major stronghold for critically endangered forest elephants, we have invested in a trial of a new low cost and low specification electric fence design. The fences start off as a simple one strand electric line with the option to add additional strands of wire if elephants manage to break through the first line of defense. This approach is well suited to small-scale individual farmers who can move, fix, and manage the deterrent fences themselves rather than relying on experts to come in for maintenance. The project has been **remarkably successful** so far and 57 crop raiding attempts by forest elephants in seven villages have been prevented.

ECF granting for promoting human-elephant coexistence in 2022

$971,000

21 grants to 20 partners in 12 countries



ECF partner Space for Giants trialing a specially designed electric fence with farmers in Gabon. © *Space for Giants Gabon.*

THIS APPROACH IS WELL SUITED TO SMALL-SCALE INDIVIDUAL FARMERS WHO CAN MOVE, FIX, AND MANAGE THE DETERRENT FENCES THEMSELVES RATHER THAN RELYING ON EXPERTS.



Camera trap images showing an elephant being deterred by the electric fence. © *Space for Giants Gabon.*

While effective barriers and management innovations must be integrated into any long-term coexistence strategy, success will ultimately come down to whether communities, governments, and civil society understand why **elephants are so critical to our planet** and value their existence. Education is therefore at the heart of most of our ECF-funded projects and our network of partners are doing an extraordinary job under difficult conditions to help us in our mission to save elephants and their habitats.



ECF partner Tsavo Trust is testing an innovative land-use model to keep sufficient space for both elephants and farmland in community conservancies in Kenya. © *Richard Moller/Tsavo Trust*.

Protecting Elephant Landscapes

Public-private partnerships prove successful

© *Brent Stirton.*

One of the great signs of hope in elephant protection in Africa has been the establishment of public-private partnerships, whereby private sector organizations take responsibility for managing state-owned protected areas. This is helpful because the governments of many African countries do not have the funds or expertise to manage their parks effectively. Although concerns have been raised about giving responsibility for key parts of national heritage to private organizations, this process does not involve handing over ownership of these areas, and all significant partnerships so far have been between local or national governments and non-profit organizations, so **the motivation is for conservation, rather than for profit**.



Savanna elephants enjoying the water in Kafue National Park, Zambia. © *Gilmour Dickson.*

ONE OF THE GREAT SIGNS OF HOPE IN ELEPHANT PROTECTION IN AFRICA HAS BEEN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS.

African Parks has taken the lead in this field, and we are very pleased that the ECF has been able to support their two newest projects in Zambia and South Sudan.

Kafue is Zambia's largest national park and has the potential to host a very **substantial elephant population**. However, there have been years of poaching attrition—not at the industrial scale that characterized poaching in Tanzania, but still enough to keep the elephant population down. We are supporting African Parks with funding for satellite collars that will allow them to track the elephants and to enable rangers to use helicopters to respond quickly to security threats.



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

An **even more exciting new agreement** between African Parks and the government of South Sudan covers Boma and Badingilo National Parks. This vast conservation area, almost twice the size of Tsavo National Park in Kenya, lies east of the Nile River, extending to the Ethiopian border. The area is best known for its massive migration of white-eared kob and tiang antelope, the second largest terrestrial mammal migration in the world after the Serengeti wildebeest. Attempts have been made to re-establish the parks, but the infrastructure is in a very poor state and the ranger force is historically underequipped and undertrained, as well as in insufficient numbers. It is particularly challenging due to the very limited road access to most of the parks, heavy seasonal flooding, the ongoing civil war, and the presence of heavily armed groups inside the parks. Aircraft support is critical for keeping the parks supplied and locating wildlife as well as responding to the various threats to elephants' safety.



Boma National Park is the largest protected area in South Sudan. © *African Parks.*





Badingilo National Park covers a vast area and, with Boma National Park, hosts the second largest terrestrial mammal migration in the world. © *Ted Woods/African Parks.*

Little is known about the current state of elephants in Boma-Badingilo. A few years ago, there were thought to be **about 300 remaining**. Today, there is uncertainty around how many are left and whether any have moved to nearby Gambella National Park in Ethiopia. In order to protect these elephants, it is important to find where they are concentrated and where they move to. The ECF is supporting African Parks with a Savanna ultralight aircraft and operating costs, as well as the collaring of five elephants. A recent aerial sighting of approximately 100 elephants has given cause for optimism.

The ECF is sometimes called upon to provide emergency funding to protected areas when support from larger donors is delayed, and when there is a danger of field operations coming to a standstill because of cash flow problems. This year we were able to **give emergency funding** to Forgotten Parks Foundation, which manages Upemba National Park in the southern Democratic Republic of the Congo; and to Noé, which manages Conkouati-Douli National Park in the Republic of Congo. We are pleased to report that our support helped both organizations get through these difficult periods and they are now on a more secure footing.



Upemba National Park holds the last remaining savanna elephant population in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. © *Forgotten Parks Foundation.*

ECF granting for promoting elephant landscapes in 2022

$1.1 million

14 grants to 13 partners in 10 countries



Above: Dense vegetation in Conkouati-Douli National Park in the Republic of Congo makes patrolling more challenging. © *Laboureur/Noé.* Below: A forest elephant in Conkouati-Douli. © *Laboureur/Noé.*



Illegal gold mining - a pervasive threat

Illegal gold mining is one of the **most serious threats to elephant strongholds**, impacting at least eight sites supported by the ECF. In Gabon, the establishment of an illegal gold mining complex south of the previously inviolate Minkébé National Park triggered the rise in poaching which more than halved the park's former population of 25,000 elephants. The mining site provided access and logistics to poachers until Gabon's Agence Nationale des Parcs Nationaux, supported by the military, moved the miners out in 2011.



An abandoned mining site in Minkébé National Park in Gabon. © *Chris Thouless.*

These mines are **not classic deep gold mines**. Instead, miners search for secondary products of flakes and nuggets eroded from the headwaters of rivers, now mixed with soil and mud. Mines range from small pits in dry river beds dug by a handful of miners, to vast enterprises with dredging barges and heavy earth-moving machinery.



Illegal gold mining adjacent to Garamba National Park in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. © *Chris Thouless.*

Illegal gold mining occurs in some of the most remote and difficult parts of Africa, and helps to fuel rebel groups and civil disorder. Gold mining contributes to the exploitation of women and children. Heavily armed miners have been responsible for the deaths of game rangers in Okapi Wildlife Reserve in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sapo National Park in Liberia. In Okapi, **civil society organizations are lobbying** for a massive Chinese-run illegal commercial mine to be closed down.

Gold is easily transported and difficult to intercept because even minuscule volumes command a high price. Its value makes it easy for dealers to corrupt law enforcement officials and rangers. The lure of gold may bring desperate people in from great distances, and their activities lead to **habitat destruction and illegal hunting for food**. The use of the poisonous metal, mercury, for extraction of gold damages the environment and human health.

However, very little is known about the dynamics of the illegal and informal gold mining sector, what its impacts are, and what can be done to curtail and control it. The first step is to get a **better understanding of what drives the gold miners and traffickers**, and the ECF has recently given a grant to Conservation South Luangwa in Zambia to investigate this aspect of the illegal trade.



The shallow pits of an illegal mine in Lower Zambezi National Park, Zambia. © *Ian Stevenson.*

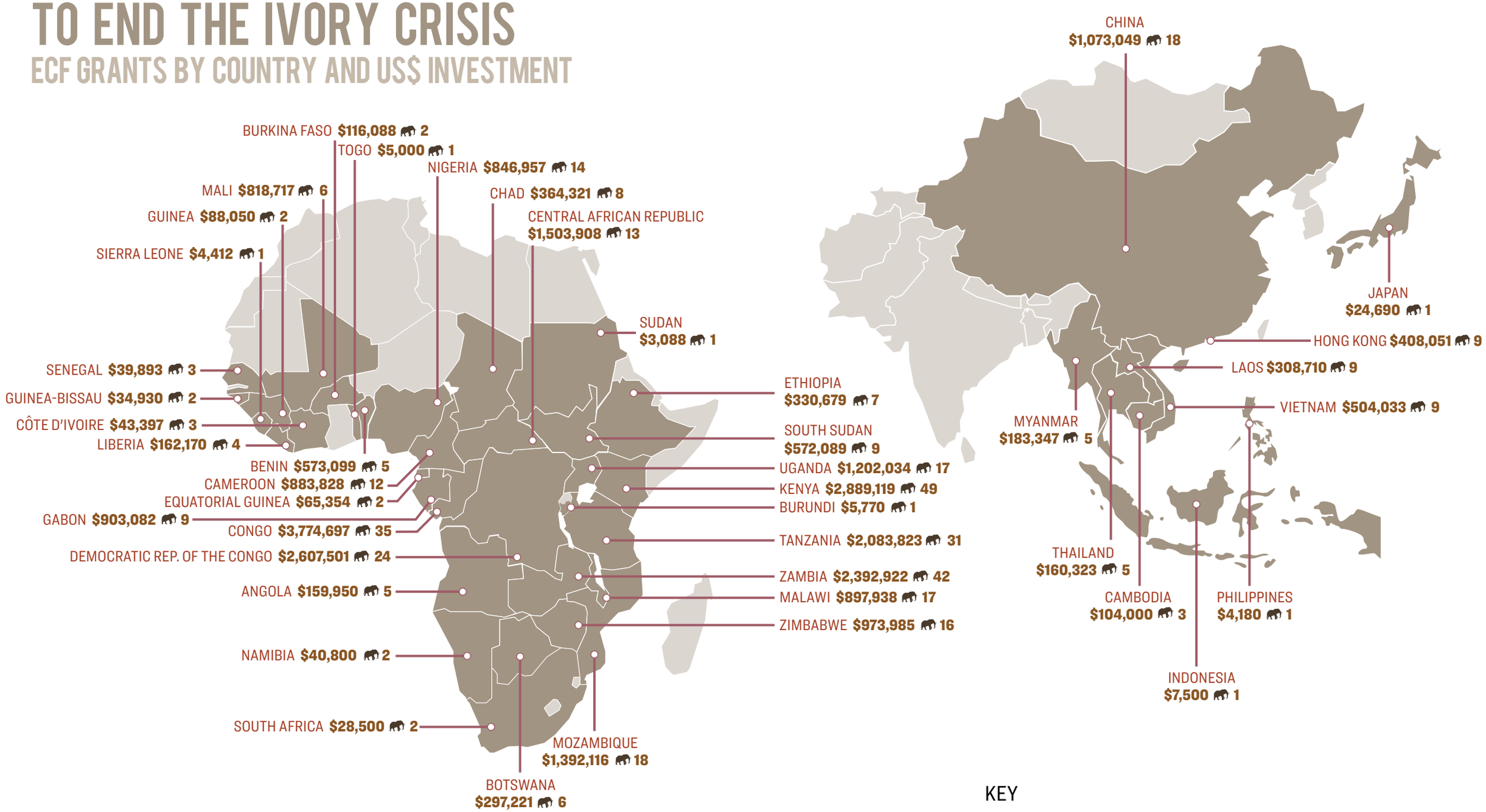
Small scale artisanal miners who are driven by poverty **need to be provided with alternative livelihoods**. An option being developed by African Parks in Garamba, also in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, is to provide support to people to dig for gold in a less environmentally damaging way outside the protected area. Here the miners do not use mercury and are not controlled by rebel groups, so the environmental and social impact of the mining will not be as bad. Another option is to try to close down the illegal trade in mercury, which is banned through the 2013 Minamata Convention on Mercury, but this ban is widely flouted.



Conkouati-Douli National Park is home to the only coastal elephant population in the Republic of Congo.
© *Laboureur/Noé.*

GLOBAL INVESTMENTS TO END THE IVORY CRISIS

ECF GRANTS BY COUNTRY AND US$ INVESTMENT



* The ECF has also funded 22 anti-trafficking grants that span regional or multi-regional areas, with support totaling $2,635,900. In addition, the ECF has funded three demand reduction grants and one anti-trafficking grant in the USA totaling $91,649.

KEY

$ Amount granted (US$)

Number of grants

This map includes all grants issued since the launch of the ECF in 2013.

Our Partners in Conservation

With the generosity of our donors, we are able to support an inspiring group of partners operating in a diversity of geographic locations, across Africa and beyond, addressing challenges to elephants that combine universal threats with unique local challenges. The ECF's programmatic expansion over recent years has brought us into contact with a new series of partners, as well as those we have been working with since the start. This has allowed us to share tried and tested methods with new partners, and bring fresh ideas to existing ones. Each organization brings innovation, expertise, dedication, and passion to ensure a future for elephants, and we are proud to work with them.

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

Our Funders

We would like to thank all our donors—our major funders, individual donors, corporate partners, and various contributors who financially support the Elephant Crisis Fund—for your incredible generosity and loyalty. It is your support that makes all the activities and 'wins' outlined in this report possible. We know you share our vision of a future where elephants are no longer under threat and your partnership as we work towards this together is hugely valued.

We would particularly like to thank our dedicated major supporters, **#knotonmyplanet** and **Tiffany & Co.**, and the following generous funders for donations made between November 2021 and October 2022:

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