

IUCN SSC African Elephant Specialist Group



2018 Report



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Co-Chairs

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Location/Affiliation

⁽¹⁾ Save The Elephants, Nairobi, Kenya
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South Africa

Number of members

62

Social networks

Website:
<https://www.iucn.org/ssc-groups/mammals/specialist-groups-a-e/african-elephant>



Mission statement

The mission of the African Elephant Specialist Group (AfESG) is: to promote the long-term conservation of Africa's elephant throughout their range.

Projected impact for the 2017-2020 quadrennium

An average population decline of approximately 21%, mainly due to illegal killing, was reported between 2007 and 2016, a period that partly overlapped with the previous quadrennium. We expect that illegal killing of elephants will decline and population numbers will increase in the available and potential range during this quadrennium. A confirmation of the forest and savannah elephants as separate species is likely to lead to more conservation focus on each species separately, thus improving their conservation status. Similarly, the results of the Red Listing process, which is due for completion in 2019, will reshape the conservation focus for African Elephants. The July 2019 AfESG members meeting will generate emerging issues and urgent areas of focus to improve on the science and conservation of the elephants. The publication of the 2016 African Elephant Status Report on a website platform, now provides a wider audience with the latest population status of the species and is eliciting questions that would prompt the AfESG to update the status report through a functional African Elephant Database.

Targets for the 2017-2020 quadrennium

Assess

Agreements: finalise African Elephant Database (AED) data acquisition and use license.

Red List: Red List assessment of the African Elephant.

Research activities: (1) enhance functionality and performance of the African Elephant Database; (2) contract University of Washington to carry out the African Elephant Taxonomy project; (3) scope the African Elephant Database's integration into the IUCN database systems and capacity to host multiple elephant species.

Plan

Policy: (1) confirm that forest and savannah elephants are two species and revise policy accordingly; (2) review proposals for the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (CITES CoP18) and attend the CoP.

Network

Membership: strengthen AfESG membership.
Proposal development and funding: (1) secure funding for AfESG members meeting; (2) fund-raise for AfESG activities and support for its Secretariat.

Scientific meetings: hold AfESG meeting.

Synergy: (1) handover of the AfESG leadership to the new Co-Chairs; (2) reach out to elephant technical experts within the government conservation agencies; (3) strengthen AfESG Secretariat.

Communicate

Scientific meetings: participate in the CITES Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants-Elephant Trade Information System Technical Advisory Group (MIKES-ETIS TAG) meeting.

Technical advice: respond to technical requests by the Global Species Programme.



Dead elephant found on a line transect in the Gourma in Mali
Photo: Emmanuel Hema

Beehive fence farmer Nzumu with honey
Photo: Lucy King



Activities and results 2018

Assess

Agreements

- i. IUCN legal office contacted to finalise African Elephant Database data acquisition and use license. (KSR #14)

Red List

- i. Assessment of the African Elephant done, peer review done, submitted to IUCN Red List team. (KSR #1)

Research activities

- i. Independent consultants were contracted by Save the Elephants (STE). Documentation on how to enhance the functionality of AED produced and due for circulation to the membership for their understanding. The AED officer is currently working on the recommendations. (KSR #14)
- ii. Contracts signed with University of Washington to carry out the African Elephant Taxonomy project. Taxonomy report produced. (KSR #12)
- iii. An internal agreement made with the IUCN Global Species Programme for African Elephant Database integration into the IUCN database systems and capacity to host multiple elephant species. (KSR #14)

Plan

Policy

- i. Reviews of CITES CoP18 proposals submitted to CITES secretariat. (KSR #27)

Network

Membership

- i. Membership data compiled for gap analyses, Postdoc identified to perform the analyses, membership policy yet to be drafted.

Proposal development and funding

- i. Funding secured for both the AfESG meeting and a one-day African Elephant Action Plan (AEAP) planning meeting. (KSR #30)
- ii. Proposal to US Fish & Wildlife Service, blurbs and concepts in preparation for STE and WWF-Kenya.

Scientific meetings

- i. AfESG meeting to be held in Pretoria, South Africa, from 14–19 July 2019. About 50 members have confirmed attendance. An additional ca. 40 relevant specialists have been invited and confirmed attendance. Four themes for the meeting have been identified and assigned to members to take the lead.

Synergy

- i. Minutes of the handover meeting are available.
- ii. We have reached out to elephant technical experts within government conservation agencies for Angola, Botswana, China, Mozambique, Namibia, South Sudan, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

- iii. AED officer and Senior Programme Officer recruited. Additional funding will be required to keep them from December 2019.

Communicate

Scientific meetings

- i. Minutes of the MIKES-ETIS TAG meeting are available.

Technical advice

- i. Technical reports provided to the Global Species Programme. (KSR #29)

Acknowledgements

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Summary of activities 2018

Species Conservation Cycle ratio: 4/5

Assess	5	
Plan	1	
Network	7	
Communicate	2	

Main KSRs addressed: 1, 12, 14, 27, 29, 30

Resolutions addressed: WCC-2016-Res-011

KSR: Key Species Result