

Race against the poachers

Illegal trade and poaching in Africa must be stopped.

In 1981, there were about 1.2 million elephants living in Africa, whereas today there are only about 415,000 elephants. Two species are highly endangered, the savannah elephants and the forest elephants. Both are endangered species. They have been severely decimated by hunting and the ivory trade. The hunt for ivory reached its sad peak in 2010-2012, when about 100,000 elephants were poached in those two years. For the relaxation of the ivory ban in 2008 created dark times. Thousands of elephants killed with axes or guns, or much worse, poisoned arrows and spears. And this agonising death only because poachers were looking at the tusks. It is mainly from the cities of Mombasa, Entebbe, and Lomé that most ivory is smuggled into the world, and usually at top prices. This is because the rarity of ivory made it highly prized. In many Asian countries, for example, carvings, pendants, or lucky charms made of ivory are still considered a luxury product and a coveted status symbol. One kilogramme has a price of 350 to 1000 euros.

Despite consumer education about the brutal reality of the ivory trade, several thousand elephants are still killed every year. And to counter this more strongly now, new, and stricter rules for the ivory trade have been established. Since 19 January 2022, intra-EU trade and commercial re-exports or imports of ivory are largely banned. However, exceptions apply to musical instruments made before 1975 and antiques made before 03.03.1947, which are mainly intended for museums - but only with appropriate permits.

Despite the new regulation, Pro Wildlife demand a worldwide ban on trade and strict legal protection for all elephants. However, we do not know whether this will ever happen. We can only hope so and take a clear position.

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