

CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSALS FOR AMENDMENT OF APPENDICES I AND II

Other proposalsA. Proposal

Maintain the Botswana population of African elephant (*Loxodonta africana*) on Appendix II.

To amend the Annotation 0604 regarding the Botswana's population of *Loxodonta africana* to read:

0604 For the exclusive purpose of allowing in the case of the population of Botswana:

- a) Trade in registered stocks of raw ivory (whole tusks and pieces) of Botswana origin owned by the Government of Botswana for commercial purposes only to CITES approved trading partners who will not re-export and subject to a annual quota of 12 tonnes (12 000kg) ivory.
- b) Trade in live animals to appropriate and acceptable destinations.
- c) International Trade in hunting trophies.
- d) Trade in hides and leather goods.

B. Proponent

Botswana

C. Supporting Statement1. Taxonomy

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1.1 Class: | Mammalia |
| 1.2 Order: | Proboscidea |
| 1.3 Family: | Elephantidae |
| 1.4 Species: | <i>Loxodonta africana</i> |
| 1.5 Scientific synonyms: | – |
| 1.6 Common Names: | English: African Elephant |
| | French: Elephant d' Afrique |
| | Spanish: Elefante africano |
| | Setswana: Tlou |
| 1.6 Code numbers: | CITES A-115.001.002.001 |
| | ISIS 5301415001002001001 |

Remarks

Botswana adheres closely to CITES.

The Wildlife Conservation and National Parks Act 1992, has as its Fifth Schedule, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wildlife Fauna and Flora. This makes the Convention

part of the National Legislation and therefore provisions of the Convention are enforceable under the laws of Botswana.

Botswana is committed to contributing to monitoring systems

Botswana has contributed to both the interim reporting system for illegal killing and illegal trade in elephant products. Botswana has undertaken to start implementation of MIKE in line with decisions on elephants taken at the 10th conference of the parties.

Botswana also adheres to international standards of managing ivory stocks. To this end Botswana has adopted a computerised ivory management system.

Unilateral Statement by Botswana

a) Botswana Registered Ivory

Only ivory from Botswana Elephant population will be included in this proposal.

b) A quota for registered stocks of raw ivory.

The export quota will refer only to the stock of both whole ivory tusks and pieces in the central ivory store, registered and under the authority of the Department of Wildlife and National Parks. The Department will provide the CITES Secretariat with a list of ivory tusks and pieces earmarked for trade.

There will be no export of ivory of unknown origin or ivory known to have come from outside Botswana.

c) Ivory to be marked with a standard system

In accordance with resolution 10.10 (b) all whole tusks in the stockpile will be individually marked with punch die and allocated a unique serial number in indelible ink. Pieces smaller than 1kg and 20 cm in length will be weighed together in bags. The marks will be correlated with the register (database) entry showing area of origin and source.

Ivory of unknown origin or coming outside Botswana is kept separate from Botswana stockpile.

d) Sale through one single centre

All ivory sales and subsequent packaging and dispatch will take place only at the government central store at the Head Office of the Department of Wildlife and National Parks.

e) Number of ivory shipment limited

For ease of monitoring and control, there will be only one shipment of ivory in a year.

f) Direct export of ivory to Importing Country.

Export permits will only allow shipments to importing countries and shipments will have to be made direct with no transit except where not geographically possible.

g) Importing countries to have internal controls and to agree not to re-export

The importing countries should have internal controls and make a commitment not to re-export.

h) Independent Monitoring

Enforcement personnel from CITES Secretariat, or Parties agreed to in advance by Botswana and the CITES Secretariat, may be present at the sale, packaging, and shipment process to check all details and inventory. Similar inspection may take place when the containers are unloaded and

the tusks distributed in the importing country. Access to the central ivory store is guaranteed to CITES Secretariat staff.

i) Use of Revenue

All net revenue accruing from sale of ivory will be used for conservation (monitoring, research, law enforcement etc.) activities plus the development activities of communities living adjacent to the elephant. A Trust Fund account has already been opened.

Rationale for this proposal

It is important to continue to trade in raw ivory because:

- a) African elephants are in competition with people in Botswana and protected areas are inadequate to ensure the survival of elephants, especially in arid and semi-arid areas, where elephants depend on resources and space that are also used by people. Climatic and other environmental variables require that elephants remain mobile and opportunistic, and makes confinement to particular reserves impractical as well as detrimental.

The Wildlife Conservation Policy of 1986 clearly recognises that if no value is attached to wildlife resources, the imperatives of other land uses will inadvertently militate against the continued existence of wildlife resources in reasonable numbers. The conflicts between elephants and human beings attendant to a growing elephant population in Botswana in the long run may disadvantage the former if the communities living side by side with elephants feel that their livelihood is tempered with by a "resource" which does not benefit them (communities) directly. The emphasis of this policy together with other government policies i.e Tourism Policy and National Conservation Strategy is the utilisation of the country's natural resources, including elephants, on a sustainable basis for the long term benefits of Botswana.

Where communities feel that conservation is only a net cost to them, and our communities increasingly are expressing those sentiments, it might not be possible to get cooperation from communities in ensuring that conservation objectives are met.

- b) Not only is trade in elephant products essential to the conservation of both the elephant, its habitat and other species, it is important for satisfying basic human needs in the elephant range. People/elephant conflicts, as alluded to already in this document, are growing and the view by the communities is that elephants are a pest. Elephant products such as ivory picked up from the communal areas could increase the value of elephants to those communities and this can only result in the community appreciating elephants more. With this benefits accruing to them directly, communities will be increasingly feel that they have a stake in the continued existence of elephants in reasonable numbers. From the last auction of 1999, pursuant to the decision 10.1, 30% of proceeds have been set aside for communities living adjacent to the elephant range with rest earmarked for elephant conservation.
- c) A principle was established in Agenda 21 and the Biodiversity Convention that every country has the right to use their natural resources to their best advantage. Botswana hereby makes an application to have that right accorded it in respect of her elephant population.
- d) There are costs associated with storing and stock piling ivory.

2. Biological Parameters

2.1 Distribution

Historical

Campbell (1990) reports that Botswana contained more surface water in the past than today. Elephants being a water dependent species are reported to have had a much wider distribution then. From accounts of early European explorers, Campbell concludes that elephant distribution was at its recorded maximum in the late 18th century. The drying of the Kgalagadi water

sources, the spread of human settlements and, in particular excessive hunting for ivory in the 1800s were thought to have contributed to reducing elephant population to a minimum in about 1890. During this period, it is reported that small concentrations of a few thousand animals remained only in the vicinity of the Okavango Delta, the western Chobe and Linyanti - Kwando Rivers in the north and the Tuli Block in the south-east.

Child (1968) and Sommerlattee (1976) described elephant concentrations appearing along the eastern section of the Chobe River and southwards in the Chobe District by the mid 1960s. These observations suggest a re-occupation of parts of the former elephant range in northern Botswana which had been abandoned by the turn of the century.

Current

The current distribution patterns and population estimates of elephants are derived from aerial surveys which form part of animal census program started in 1987 and which has been ongoing since.

Elephant distribution in the larger northern elephant range is determined by availability of surface water. During the wet season, water is normally available in the whole elephant range which has a number of seasonal pans. During this time of the year, elephants are more widely distributed (see figure 1).

Dry season distribution are noticeably concentrated along the perennial water sources of the Kwando-Linyanti-Chobe river systems on the Botswana/Namibia boundary. This concentrations must overlap into Namibia this time. There are small concentrations along the Zimbabwean border which is probably continuous with populations on the other side, as there are no real barriers to movement. The other concentrations are found in the western edges of the Okavango Delta.

Elephants are present in the Northern Tuli Block throughout the year though a few of these regularly cross a short way into Zimbabwe's Tuli Circle.

2.2 Habitat availability

Within the northern elephant range, there are five broad habitat types, as defined by the dominant tree species present, riverine woodland (including the Chobe/Linyanti Rivers and the Delta system), *Acacia* woodland, *Colophospermum mopane* woodland, *Terminalia/Burkea* woodland and *Baieaia plurijuga* woodland. Various combination of these categories also occur, with mixed dominance of the major species.

Concern has been expressed over elephant impact on these habitat types, particularly the riverine, by a variety of researchers since the 1960s (Child 1968, Sommerlatte 1976, Simpson 1978, Moroka 1984). Currently studies are on-going on elephant/habitat interaction in Moremi and the Chobe.

As a consequence of observations that the structure of the riverine vegetation is being drastically modified by the high elephant concentrations during the dry season, the elephant management plan (officially referred to as the "Conservation and Management of Elephants in Botswana) which was adopted by the Botswana Parliament in 1991, prescribed among other management actions, the provision of artificial watering points in a bid to spread out elephants. In addition, culling of elephants, to keep the elephant population at the 1990 level of 54 600, was to be embarked upon under the management plan. These strategies were meant to mitigate impact of elephants on vegetation. However, culling was never done.

In the Tuli Block in the central eastern Botswana, where the elephant densities of 0.75 to 1.0 sq km are comparable to the northern Botswana, the habitat is dominated by *mopane* and there is concern over the conversion of woodland to thicket scrub land.

2.3 Population status

The Botswana elephant population estimates stand at 106 494 with a range of 84 898 to 128 090. The African elephant as a species account for about 30% of the total herbivore biomass of Botswana. The population continue to grow at a rate of approximately 5% per annum.

2.4 Population trends

There is a definite up-ward population trend in the Botswana elephant population. It might be worth restating that the elephant range in the northern part of Botswana has been expanding west-wards into areas of the Okavango where elephants had not been seen in many years. And here we are talking of a total continuous elephant range estimated at 80 000 sq.km. The range is large, non-fragmented and secure.

2.5 Geographic trends

Geographical range of elephants in Botswana has been expanding. The current elephant range, especially in northern Botswana, is still expanding with elephants moving into previously unused areas such as the western Okavango Delta. 99% of the total elephant population of Botswana occurs within the area of approximately 80 000 km² in northern Botswana, but there are increasing conflicts on the fringes of the area.

2.6 Role of the species in the ecosystem

Elephants play a significant role at the ecosystem level, and are capable of greatly modifying their own habitat and consequently the habitat of other species. Elephants may displace other species such as rhinos and ungulates such as roan antelope in situations where surface water is limited, as elephants completely dominate water holes during droughts.

At low densities elephants impact promote species richness and biodiversity. In wooded areas, at low densities, elephants open up thickets creating pathways for other species and promoting growth of grasses. At higher densities thickets are destroyed and trees knocked down, encouraging growth of grasses and changing species composition of the ecosystem.

Over-concentration of elephants in protected areas have in the past impacted on the biodiversity of such areas and management intervention might be justified to reduce elephant densities.

Elephants are overpopulated in northern Botswana resulting in vegetation suffering enormous damage and some tree species have disappeared in some areas as a result. With regard to adverse impact of elephants on other species, the Chobe river front is home to the rare Chobe bush-buck (*Tragelaphus scriptus ornatus*), which it is feared that with the continued rapid change of its restricted habitat could suffer decline. The Chobe is also home to the rare species of sable (*Hippotragus niger*) and roan (*H. equinue*). The elephant, which has a wide range of food is believed to compete with these animals for forage. So a high elephant population could work to the disadvantage of these species too, as well as others.

3 Utilization and Trade

3.1 National utilization

The principal form of utilisation of the elephant in Botswana is recreational or sport hunting. A limited quota of eighty (80) bulls approved by CITES was introduced in 1996 and a further quotas of eighty-seven (87) bulls for 1997, one hundred and sixty-eight (168) bulls for 1998 and one hundred and seventy four (174) bulls for 1999. This is after a self imposed ban on elephant hunting that started in 1983. The off-take is less than 0.01% of the total population and this should have no effect on the elephant population. Elephant hunting provides a good source of revenue for community-managed wildlife areas. This is important because it is these communities who bear the cost of living side by side with elephants. Ivory from recreational hunting is kept as trophy by the hunters.

The elephant tusks available in the Department storage facilities are mainly a result of natural mortality as well as managed activities such as Problem Animal Control (PAC) and confiscation from illegal hunters. There is some 24 806,59 kilograms of ivory in government storage to date. Of these, 7 112.15 kilograms, comprise of some tusks and ivory pieces, from outside of Botswana or of unknown origin and poached ivory.

Trade in Elephant hides and related products

Botswana presently does not recover elephant hide from elephant killed in protection of property due to a current lack of market. Botswana would like to collect hides and trade them for the benefit rural conservation. Generally we do not expect to collect a lot of hides unless a need arises to control elephant population for management purposes.

3.2 Legal international trade

The last ivory auction held was in April 1999 as a highly experimental export of 17 170.5 kg to Japan. In CITES report of the 42nd standing committee held in Lisbon, Portugal, the CITES Secretariat confirmed that trade had taken place successfully and that Botswana and other trading parties had fully complied with precautionary undertaking. Revenue accrued from this auction was deposited in a Trust Fund and will be used to benefit elephant conservation directly together with development programs of communities living adjacent to the elephant range.

3.3 Illegal trade

Illegal trade in Botswana as well as Southern Africa region is low.

Table 1: Illegal off take of elephants in Botswana

YEAR	NO OF PEOPLE ARRESTED
1989	92
1990	48
1991	23
1992	21
1993	20
1994	10
1995	16
1996	2
1997	9
1998	17

The decline in the numbers of elephants being poached after 1989 is attributed to the formation of the highly specialised and trained Anti-Poaching Unit (APU), within the Department of Wildlife and National Parks in 1989. The unit currently has a staff complement of 85 staff. The unit also has access to two departmental Cessna 206 air-crafts and a helicopter. Boats are also provided in areas such as the Okavango and Chobe to the APU.

The APU's efforts have over the years been and continue to be supplemented by the Botswana Defence Force (BDF), the Police and their Intelligence units. The BDF has about 400-600 soldiers deployed in Anti-poaching work throughout the country with the majority based in the elephant range at any given time.

Courses have for sometime been and continue to be offered for sister department, such as Customs and Immigration on what animal trophies cannot be exported or imported without permits. These courses also enlighten those departments on matters relating to CITES. The combined efforts of the country 's law enforcement agencies has done a good job in deterring poaching or keeping it at a very low level, especially for species like elephants.

3.4 Actual or potential trade impacts

The absence of trade in elephant products is seen as the greatest threat to elephant survival in Southern Africa. In Botswana elephant populations have grown from about 34 000 to 106 494 since 1983. Government's suspension of elephant hunting in 1980's was an initiative that showed that Botswana were conscious of the conservation of their wildlife while studies were being conducted on the status of elephants. The status of the Botswana elephant population is known. In addition, it has been established that conflicts with people of the growing elephant population continue to grow. As stated previously, there is a westward expansion of the elephant range in the Okavango Delta area. This is resulting in crop depredation and even loss of human life in this area. People are running out of patience and it is not uncommon to hear in the news citizens accusing government of caring more for wildlife than humans. This is no doubt militates against conservation in the long run.

A lot of people believe that any legal trade will encourage illegal trade. Illegal trade continues and if it is not replaced by legal trade, it will grow. That's a real threat.

Live Specimens

Botswana traded in some 30 live animals with South Africa in 1998.

Parts and derivatives

Refer to Section 3.2 of this document.

3.5 Captive breeding

There is no captive breeding program for elephants in Botswana.

4. Conservation and Management

4.1 Legal status

4.1.1 National

Elephants in Botswana occur in two major regions of the country, namely what is commonly called the northern range within Botswana and the Tuli Block, that is the Mashatu Game Reserve and its environs. The northern population constitutes about 99% of the overall population with the rest occurring in the Tuli Block. The northern range consists of an area about 80000 sqkm. This area includes two national parks, a game reserve, wildlife management areas, and forest reserves. The area is also within what is referred to as the Buffalo fence, which is a stock free zone. National Parks provide the highest level of legal protection. No killing of elephants is done within national parks except where human life is threatened.

4.2 Species management

4.2.1 Population monitoring

As alluded to in Section 2.1, a program to monitor elephant population was initiated after the ban in elephant hunting of 1983-94. This program from 1987 to 1995 was conducted twice in a year during the wet and dry seasons, covering the whole northern elephant range by a highly qualified team. The surveys continue albeit during the dry season only except every three years when a wet season survey is also undertaken.

4.2.2. Habitat conservation

National Parks under the Wildlife and National Parks Act of 1992 are declared "for the propagation, protection and preservation therein of wild animal life, vegetation and objects of geological, ethnological, archaeological, historical or other scientific interest

for the other scientific interest for the benefit and advantage and enjoyment of the inhabitants of Botswana". In a bid to further conserve elephant habitat and to maintain biodiversity, the Government of Botswana, came up with the "Conservation and Management of Elephant in Botswana in 1991. One of the Management issues to come out of the policy was to keep the northern elephant population at the 1990 level.

Fire is another significant cause of habitat change in northern Botswana. Attempts to mitigate fire impacts is through construction of fire breaks. In the event of fires, the whole community in an area is expected to participate in controlling any such outbreaks.

4.2.3. Management measures

At present sport hunting under controlled, limited quota is the major elephant population management undertaken in Botswana. It is, however, important to note that the quota is so minute as not to have any effect on the population currently growing at the rate of about 5% per annum. Only bulls are taken during sport hunting.

Problem animal is another management operation undertaken. As a result of the growing elephant population, there has been increased conflicts with human beings. Elephants that are a threat to human life and property are destroyed.

4.3 Control measures

4.3.1 International trade

The following mechanisms are in place to control international trade of trophies of elephants and other wildlife products:

At the port of exit, CITES and other import permits are checked by Customs and Excise. In case of doubt, Customs have been advised to call on the Department of Wildlife and National Parks officers to assist and provide expert advise.

Presentations are made to Customs officials from around the country on CITES procedures. During the courses it is pointed out that Customs officials can confiscate trophies pending identification by DWNP personnel.

Permits for raw ivory are issued in Gaborone. Three field stations, namely Francistown, Kasane and Maun are authorised to issue export permits for trophies from recreational hunting of elephants.

The Department of Animal Health and Production issues veterinary health certificates only on production of a valid CITES permit form DWNP.

4.3.2 Domestic Measures

Botswana marks its ivory according to the requirements of CITES using a two letter code plus a third letter which is an internal denoting code the origin of the tusk within the country. For example, BWJ and BWK indicate that the ivory is from Maun and Kasane, respectively. Ivory is marked soon after it has been brought to the storage facility or before two weeks has elapsed.

Stringent legislation, Wildlife Conservation and National Parks Act of 1992, has deterrent penalties for would be law breakers. According to the laws of Botswana, any person convicted of an offence involving the unlawful possession of or trading in ivory shall be liable to a fine of P50 000 and to imprisonment of ten (10) years.

5. Information on Similar Species

The Asian elephant (*Elephas maximus*) is the only other extant proboscidean. It is listed in Appendix I of the convention. The proponent belief that with the precautionary measures adopted, it is not likely that this proposal to continue to trade in ivory will prejudice the survival of the Asian elephant.

6. Other Comments

Not applicable as only the population of Botswana is involved in the proposal.

7. References

Campbell, A.C. (1990). History of Elephants in Botswana. in: P. Hancock (ed.), *The Future of Botswana's Elephants*. Kalahari Conservation Society, Gaborone. pp.5-15

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Elephant mean density distribution 1989 - 1993

