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THE Ivory PROJECT

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THE Ivory PROJECT



*Increasing awareness
of the role of ivory
in sustainable
elephant conservation*



THE *Ivory* PROJECT

was created in 2004 by journalist and conservationist John Frederick Walker to examine one of the most controversial issues in elephant conservation: the role of ivory. Among its initiatives are the publication of Walker's forthcoming history of ivory by Atlantic Monthly Press, the development of a traveling museum exhibition based on the book, and a related educational outreach lecture tour.

Ivory – the remarkable treasure that comes from the teeth of elephants – has been universally coveted for its beauty, ability to be finely carved, and scarcity throughout human history. Each age, each culture, from ancient Egypt to nineteenth-century America to modern Japan, has found its own uses for this precious organic substance: artistic, devotional, utilitarian, decorative, extravagant, frivolous.

The seductiveness of ivory has not only been recognized throughout history; it has helped to shape it. The desire to find new sources of ivory spurred the exploration – and exploitation – of Africa. The ivory trade became linked with the slave trade as manufacturers of combs, buttons, scientific instruments, billiard balls and piano keys demanded an endless supply of elephant tusks.

With the abolition of slavery, attention fell on ivory's other dark cost. By the final decades of the twentieth century, the routine slaughter of elephants the trade depended on came to threaten the very existence of

these extraordinary creatures. Illegal poaching reached record levels in East Africa, provoking a global outcry that led to listing the African elephant as endangered, and to a worldwide ivory ban.

Yet there is recognition that the yearly stockpiling of legitimate ivory recovered from elephants that die of natural causes in Africa's parks and reserves can be sold to fund the protection of the last remaining herds – but does this only encourage poaching?

Finding answers will require a deeper examination of the issues involved – an examination that **THE IVORY PROJECT** will undertake.

JOHN FREDERICK WALKER is a veteran journalist whose writings have appeared in *The New York Times*, *National Geographic Traveler*, *Wildlife Conservation*, and dozens of other publications. He is the author of *A Certain Curve of Horn: The Hundred-Year Quest for the Giant Sable Antelope of Angola* (Atlantic Monthly Press, 2002), a narrative of his search for an endangered species in war-torn Africa, which was praised both by the media and international conservation organizations. He has lectured at every major natural history museum in the U.S., as well as zoos, universities and many other institutions, and made over 200 appearances on radio and television. Walker brings to **THE IVORY PROJECT** a life long passion for African wildlife and a commitment to objective in-depth journalism.



THE IVORY PROJECT is a project of the African Wildlife Foundation. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., with regional offices in Kenya, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe, AWF is the leading conservation organization focused solely on the African continent. Since its founding in 1961, it has protected elephants by saving their habitat and training hundreds of Africans in conservation.

To meet its goals, **THE IVORY PROJECT** must raise \$80,000 to cover travel, research, exhibition development and educational outreach expenses (a detailed budget is available on request). Your tax-deductible contribution will help ensure the success of this vital conservation initiative.