

# African wildlife NEWS

*Your support at work in Africa's landscapes*



LEFT: In addition to fighting other bulls, tusks allow elephants to pry bark from trees and to dig for water or roots underground.

## Unnatural Selection

*Decades of poaching and overhunting of large-tusked elephants may be leading to generations of elephants with smaller tusks—or no tusks at all*

**W**hen Mountain Bull and Satao—two of Kenya's oldest and most famous elephant bulls—were killed by poachers, the deaths sent shock waves through Kenya's conservation community and around the world. Poached for their enormous tusks, Mountain Bull and Satao put a face on the tens of thousands of African elephants killed every year whose ivory, in some parts of the world, is worth more than their lives.

"It is an irreparable loss," says AWF Senior Director of Conservation Science Philip Muruthi. "Not only because two of Kenya's legends are gone forever, but it's also one more blow to the species as a whole."

The deaths of Mountain Bull and Satao may be telling of a larger tragedy unfolding: an end to the era of big tuskers.

### Accelerating evolution

"Big elephants carry genes for survival and are preferred by females, living proof that they

have been successful to survive so long," says Dr. Iain Douglas-Hamilton, founder and CEO of Save The Elephants, an AWF partner in an ivory demand reduction campaign in Asia.

Centuries of poaching and overhunting, however, have relentlessly cut down big elephants at the height of their reproductive power, with an observable impact on the size and weight of elephant tusks. Douglas-Hamilton notes that mean tusk weights are lower today than in Victorian times.

Dr. Joyce Poole, an elephant ethologist and co-director of ElephantVoices, explains that tusks continue to grow throughout an elephant's life, becoming longer and thicker generally with age—though with genetic variability, some older males do have smaller tusks than their counterparts.

"Assuming that poachers select according to tusk size, they will tend to kill older males with very large tusks, thereby taking out of the population of breeding-aged males who

*Continued on page 5*

## An inside look at anti-poaching operations

In southern Kenya, AWF has partnered with NGO Big Life Foundation to train community scouts and establish cross-border anti-poaching operations. We talked with Big Life's Richard Bonham about what it takes to protect the area's wildlife.

### Q: What challenges do community scouts face while on patrol?

**A:** Probably [our] greatest challenge is to make sure the scouts have the right equipment to undertake the patrol in the first place. AWF has funded ranger training and supplied crucial equipment like tents, sleeping bags, and torches

*Continued on page 4*

## EMERGENCY RESPONSE

AWF has created a US\$10 million Emergency Response Fund to combat poaching and wildlife trafficking.

**SPECIAL  
SUPPLEMENT  
INCLUDED**



The African Wildlife Foundation, together with the people of Africa, works to ensure the wildlife and wild lands of Africa will endure forever.

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*African Wildlife News* is published four times a year.  
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# Are we doing enough?



**H**ow do you know when you've done enough? Without the benefit of hindsight, it's not always easy to tell whether you're succeeding—whether you're doing the right thing at the right time to achieve the right result.

Sometimes, though, the crisis is so urgent and visible that hindsight is not needed. There are moments when you see, with absolute clarity, that more simply must be done.

Like most conservation groups, we have experienced these moments many times at the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF). A few years ago, when elephant and rhino poaching began to escalate again in Africa, AWF quickly realized this wave of killings represented a new, darker reality rather than a temporary aberration. In response, we launched our Species Protection Grants, which provided targeted funds to projects and partners directly protecting specific wildlife populations.

Earlier this year, AWF again had one of those “we need to be doing more” moments. Our species protection grantees were performing successfully, but we asked ourselves: Could we be making a bigger impact on Africa's poaching and wildlife trafficking crisis? The answer was an unequivocal “yes.”

I am happy to announce that AWF has therefore committed US\$10 million—no small piece of change, especially when you consider our size in comparison to other conservation groups—toward an Emergency Response Fund, which will scale up and expand our wildlife protection and anti-poaching operations across Africa. You can read more about this new emergency response approach in our special supplement, found between pages 4 and 5.

The other articles in this issue touch on the many consequences of the global illegal wildlife trade, including our cover story on the loss of Africa's big tuskers, and another article on the human costs of protecting wildlife. Meanwhile, as you'll learn on page 7, even Africa's protected areas are being compromised by extractive industries. If protecting Africa's wildlife from poachers is the battle, then protecting Africa's wild lands from exploitation may be the war. After all, what have you achieved if you save an elephant from a poacher, only to find it has nowhere to live?

We at AWF will continue to ask ourselves, “Are we doing enough for Africa's wildlife and wild lands?” So long as the answer is “no,” we will continue the fight. We hope we can count on you to stand with us—with the dream that one day, we'll see Africa's wildlife roaming safely through their habitats and know that, finally, we've done enough.

**There are moments when you see, with absolute clarity, that more must be done**

*Patrick Bergin*

Patrick J. Bergin, Ph.D.  
Chief Executive Officer

RIGHT: Read about AWF's Emergency Response Fund, which is funding aerial patrols in Zambia, among other activities, in our special supplement.



# AWF roundup

## World Heritage designation for Okavango

The Okavango Delta is one of the most diverse ecosystems in sub-Saharan Africa, comprising wetland and dry land habitat and supporting a diversity of species, including 400 species of birds and about 200,000 large mammals. In June, the UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (or UNESCO) named it the 1,000<sup>th</sup> World Heritage Site. AWF's own Dr. Karen Ross was instrumental in getting the Delta listed after working for years with Botswana's Department of Museums and other stakeholders to press for its designation.

Unfortunately, a number of other World Heritage Sites in Africa are under threat, including Selous Game Reserve. AWF began working in southern Tanzania, near Selous, this year, and is providing support to two other World Heritage Sites in Danger, Senegal's Niokolo-Koba National Park and Ethiopia's Simien Mountains National Park.



Paul Runze / PDRimages.com

## AWF talks ivory trafficking with Charlie Rose

This summer, renowned television host Charlie Rose invited AWF CEO Patrick Bergin, AWF trustee and supermodel Veronica Varekova, and Marcus Asner, alternate member of the U.S. Advisory Council on Wildlife Trafficking, onto his popular show to discuss elephant poaching and the illegal ivory trade.

Watch the interview at [awf.org/charlie-rose](http://awf.org/charlie-rose)



## 1<sup>st</sup> time for everything

With AWF assistance, 48 students and four teachers from Lupani Primary School took a field trip to Zambia's famed Victoria Falls and Mosi-oa-Tunya National Park. This was the first time that some students had ever seen wildlife or ridden in a car.

Perin Banks



77  
Prison sentence, in years, handed down to a rhino poacher by a South African court

## Terrorist groups exploiting natural resources

According to a report by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and Interpol, around 15 percent of elephants killed each year in Africa are in or very close to conflict zones, with terrorists and other non-state actors responsible for 90 percent of the poaching. It is estimated that non-state armed groups receive around US\$3.9 million to US\$12.3 million annually from the illegal ivory trade. Just as profitable for militias and crime groups is the illicit charcoal trade, with Al Shabaab reportedly making most of its money from this business.

## Secure the future for yourself, and for Africa's wildlife

Thanks to our new partnership with Comerica Legacy Foundation, it's easier than ever for AWF's supporters to make a charitable gift annuity. A charitable gift annuity is a simple contractual agreement wherein you make a gift of cash or stock to a charity (Comerica, on behalf of AWF). In return, you—and a loved one, if you choose—receive a fixed income each year for the rest of your life. What remains of the gift annuity after you pass away stays with AWF.

People often consider charitable gift annuities because of certain tax benefits and because payment amounts never change or run out. Meanwhile, the gift portion of your annuity will help AWF protect Africa's precious wildlife and wild lands for decades to come—a win-win for all involved.

To learn more, call +1 202 939 3333 or visit [awf.org/legacy](http://awf.org/legacy)



Marius Coetzee/mariuscoetzee.com

# The Human Cost of Protecting Wildlife

*Victims of today's poaching wars include elephants, rhinos... and rangers*

**T**he work is physically grueling, the hours are long, and the terrain covered is vast. For some wildlife rangers, getting ready for the day means gearing up for war. For others, a rusty rifle is all that stands between them and a charging elephant or armed poachers.

“Elephants and rhinos aren’t the only victims of the illegal wildlife trade,” says Ms. Lusizi Mwale, senior wildlife warden with Zambia’s Mosi-oa-Tunya Areas Management Unit. “Anyone who puts on a uniform and stands between a poacher and his quarry is at risk, and some pay the ultimate price.” According to the Thin Green Line Foundation, nearly 30 African rangers have died in the 12 months leading up to World Ranger Day 2014 in July.

## **Danger to scouts, too**

Community scouts engaged to protect the areas outside of parks and reserves can find themselves at the mercy of a poacher or wild animal as well. “Miraculously, we have not yet lost any scouts while in the line of duty, but they have been shot at with rifles and poisoned arrows and attacked with machetes,” says Richard Bonham, director of operations for Big Life Foundation, an AWF partner organization that trains community scouts to conduct anti-poaching patrols in community areas in southern Kenya (see below).

To assist rangers and scouts and keep them safe while on the job, AWF supports paramilitary training and is evaluating what technology can complement ranger patrols and wildlife monitoring.

“These individuals are at the front line of today’s poaching wars,” says AWF Senior Director of Conservation Science Dr. Philip Muruthi. “They should be supported and honored accordingly.” —*Marie Frei*



**ABOVE:** Africa's rangers and scouts are on the front lines of the poaching war.

Billy Dodson

An Inside Look, *continued from page 1*

all the important cogs that keep the anti-poaching machine running.

Our rangers engage in two types of patrols. The routine patrol involves covering ground, showing your presence, and looking for signs of poaching, whether it’s a dead animal or poacher’s tracks. The other kind of patrol is set in place for a reason, mostly as a result of information from an informer. Often these require the men to deploy at night and sit at our observation posts on the tops of hills waiting for something to happen.

## **Q: What does Big Life emphasize during training?**

**A:** Discipline is the backbone of a good scout. After that, we need to ensure they have a strong foundation in a number of skills: radio communication, first aid, wildlife law, interrogation, ambush procedures, and using cameras and GPS.

## **Q: What characteristics do you look for in a scout?**

**A:** We only recruit from the local community, which is probably our greatest asset. They are bush-savvy and know the country like the back of their hands. Over and above this, our best scouts have a sense of ownership of the wildlife they are protecting, which gives the job real meaning.

## **Q: What outreach are you doing to inspire younger generations to embark on a career in conservation?**

**A:** This is the most important question you have asked me. We could be operating with the best-trained special-ops teams available and still lose the battle [if communities are not on board]. There have to be economic engines in place to generate money from wildlife, mainly through tourism revenue, or benefit communities in other ways, such as by supporting schools and general education, funding scholarships in wildlife-related fields, or assisting with health care. We have to get the people living with wildlife to want to protect it. —*Interview by Marie Frei*

Unnatural Selection, *continued from page 1*

also happen to have very big tusks,” says Poole, who studied the effects of poaching on East Africa’s elephant populations as an AWF researcher in the late 1980s. “Those males then no longer pass on their genes for large tusks.”

### Going tuskless

Smaller tusks are not the only genetic consequence of heavy poaching. Over several decades, researchers have documented an increase in the percentage of tuskless males and females in a number of elephant populations.

A 2008 paper published in the “African Journal of Ecology,” for example, noted that the number of tuskless female elephants in Zambia’s South Luangwa National Park and adjacent Lupande Game Management Area had increased from 10.5 percent in 1969 to 38.2 percent in 1989—the peak of the previous ivory wars—largely as a result of illegal hunting for ivory. Similarly, a 1991 elephant conservation plan in Uganda reported a higher-than-normal percentage of tuskless elephants in Queen Elizabeth National Park—between 9 percent and 25 percent—and singled out poaching as the main cause.

“Elephants carry a sex-linked gene for tusklessness, so in most populations there are always some tuskless elephants,” says Poole. “However, because males require tusks for fighting, tusklessness is typically selected against in males and very few males are tuskless. Tuskless males have a much harder time breeding and do not pass on their genes as often as tusked males.”

In addition to fighting other bulls, tusks allow elephants to pry bark from trees, dig for water or roots, and otherwise perform a variety of functions. In heavily poached populations, though, the ratio of tuskless animals in the population increases as poaching continues, says Poole. “Whereas baseline tusklessness in a population might be 4 percent, over time as more and more tusked elephants are killed, the percentage may increase to 60 percent in the older animals,” she explains. “When this group breeds with tuskless females, 50 percent of whose daughters are tuskless, you begin to see the gene for tusklessness spreading in the population. You can see this in almost any population that has experienced

a wave of heavy poaching, in Gorongosa [in Mozambique], for example, or Selous [in Tanzania].”

### Economic value of teeth

According to a 2014 report released by the UN Environment Programme and Interpol, 1 kg of raw ivory typically sells for US\$750. Each of an elephant’s tusks weighs

## Researchers have documented an increase in the percentage of tuskless elephants in a number of populations.

approximately 5.5 kg; hence, ivory taken from the average elephant and sold on the black market in Asia could fetch as much as US\$8,000. In some instances, very large tusks and tusk tips have yielded wholesale prices of more than US\$1,000 per kg, especially when ivory is in short supply.

“While the illegal ivory trade might enrich a few criminals, it deprives elephant range countries and their people of billions of dollars in revenue through the tourism industry,” says AWF’s Muruthi.

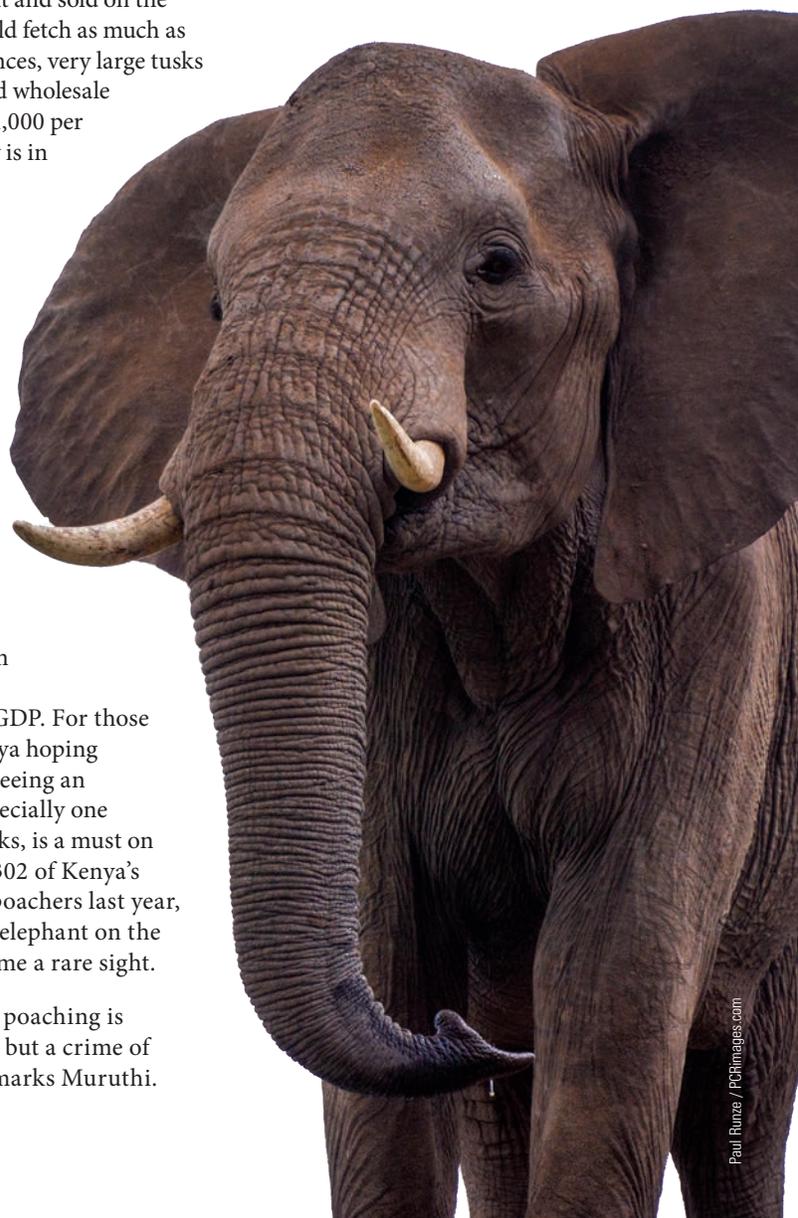
In Kenya, where Satao and Mountain Bull were killed, tourism revenue contributes 20 percent to the national GDP. For those tourists on safari in Kenya hoping to see Africa’s Big Five, seeing an elephant in the wild, especially one with large, imposing tusks, is a must on the checklist. But with 302 of Kenya’s elephants cut down by poachers last year, spotting the big-tusked elephant on the savanna may soon become a rare sight.

“In many ways, elephant poaching is not just a wildlife crime but a crime of economic sabotage,” remarks Muruthi.

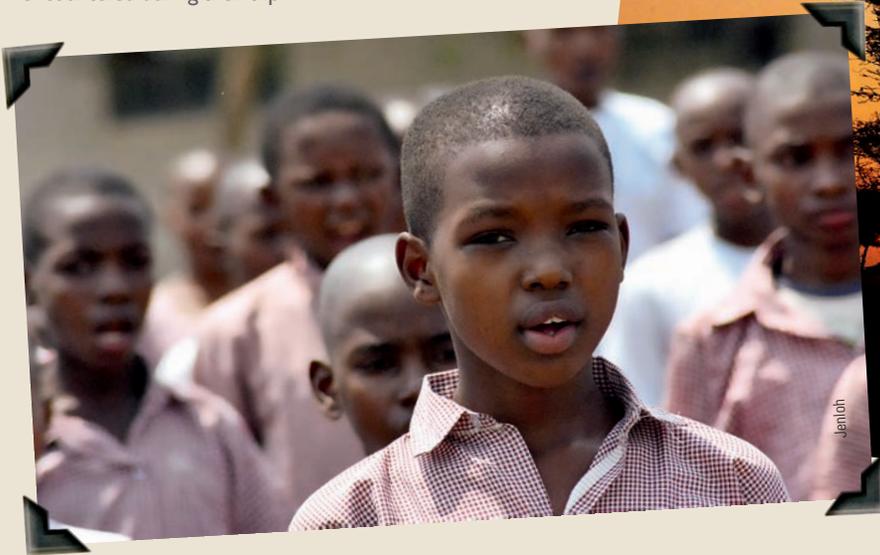
In a way, wiping out elephants—be they big tuskers or not—amounts to ecological sabotage as well. Elephants perform an important role in the ecosystem, as landscape architects—pushing down trees, establishing trails, and creating new patches of grassland for other wildlife—and as biotic agents that disperse seeds long distances through dense forests and across the savanna.

“This is why AWF focuses its species conservation efforts so much on megafauna like the elephant,” Muruthi explains. “If elephant populations are doing well within a given habitat, it tends to have positive trickle-down benefits for other wildlife in the ecosystem.” —*Kathleen Garrigan*

BELOW: Elephant poaching can amount to economic and ecological sabotage.



RIGHT: Stunning sunrises were among the highlights safarigoers encountered during their trip.



ABOVE: "We were impressed and moved by what AWF was doing in the protection of wildlife and in their efforts to provide education," said AWF supporter Yeo Chee Tong, referring to AWF's work at Manyara Ranch School.



## Ringling in the Chinese New Year

*AWF is finding personal, positive ways to connect Asians to our African conservation efforts*

Occurring on the second new moon after the winter solstice, Chinese New Year is a traditional holiday during which the Chinese typically honor their ancestors and celebrate spring—in a sense celebrating both the old and new. For AWF supporter Yeo Chee Tong and his wife, Jenny, the auspicious occasion was an ideal time to introduce several of their longtime friends to Africa and to AWF.

Thus early February saw the Yeos and a handful of their Chinese friends arriving in Arusha, Tanzania, to take part in a seven-day safari organized by AWF. The group, accompanied by AWF CEO Patrick Bergin, experienced the wildebeest and zebra foaling season in the Serengeti, explored the Ngorongoro Crater, and also visited AWF's Manyara Ranch Conservancy and accompanying school.

With Asia's impact on Africa today—Asian nations, particularly China, have become significant trade and development partners to Africa, and Asian demand for elephant ivory and rhino horn is leading to the poaching and trafficking of Africa's iconic megafauna—the safari offered an ideal opportunity for us to show firsthand just what AWF is fighting for on the African continent. Following are some photos—most taken by Chee Tong's wife Jenny—of the trip. ■



ABOVE: According to Yeo Chee Tong, who worked with AWF to arrange the Chinese New Year safari, "The trip exceeded our expectations."



LEFT: While in Tanzania, Yeo Chee Tong (center, in dark blue) and the other safari participants, led by AWF CEO Patrick Bergin (center, in light blue shirt), visited AWF's team in Tanzania to get a firsthand account of what AWF is doing on the ground.

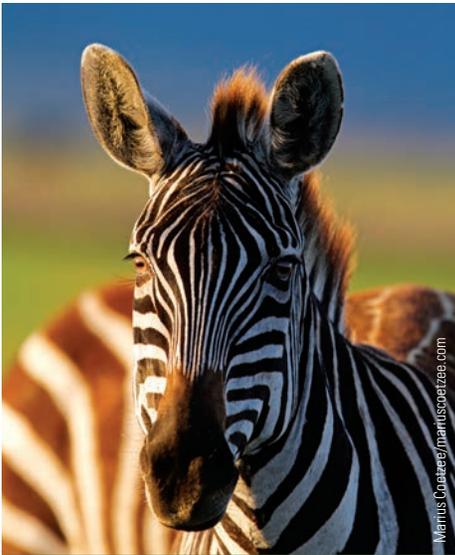
# Define 'Protected'

*As Africa modernizes, the continent's protected areas feel the heat from development, particularly from extractive industries*

Look at almost any African country on a map and you'll soon notice splotches of green dotted here and there. Zoom in, and you realize many of these splotches are in fact designated parks and reserves, economic and ecological anchors in their respective countries and the building blocks of biodiversity on the continent.

Africa's parks and reserves are under threat, however, as governments give away concessions inside or alongside protected areas to companies extracting minerals, oil, gas, timber, and other natural resources. Local and international conservation groups are urging governments

to respect the laws that govern these protected areas. This past June, under pressure from conservation groups, the British government, UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (or UNESCO), and the international community, British petro giant Soco International announced it was canceling plans to drill for oil in the Democratic Republic of Congo's Virunga National Park. The company's withdrawal from the park was a rare victory at a time when extractive and exploitive activities have already penetrated the sacrosanct borders of many of Africa's protected areas. Following are a few additional sites of concern. —William H. Funk



## Serengeti National Park, Tanzania

■ **KEY SPECIES:** Wildebeest, black rhinos, elephants, cheetahs

■ **THREAT:** The Tanzanian government has advocated for a commercial road across a 53-kilometer stretch of the park, linking the towns of Loliondo and Musoma. The road would endanger an important migration route for wildebeest, zebra, and other ungulates.

■ **RESPONSE:** AWF and many others put forth an alternative southern route that would better benefit wildlife and people. The regional East African Court of Justice ruled against the paved highway, but the Tanzanian government maintains it will upgrade the existing dirt track to gravel. AWF is monitoring.

■ **STATUS:** **Pending**



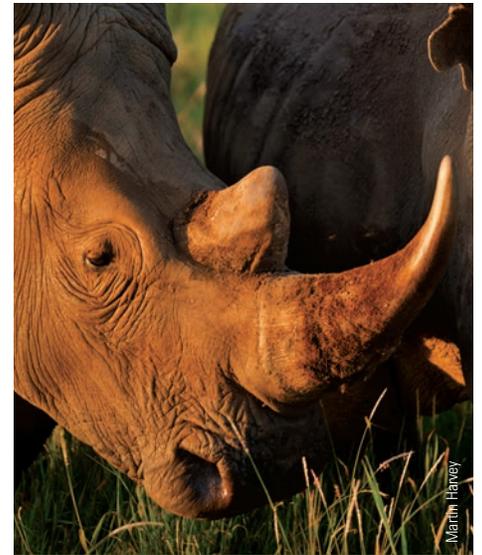
## Lower Zambezi National Park, Zambia

■ **KEY SPECIES:** Eland, elephants, leopards, Samango monkeys

■ **THREAT:** In 2011, an Australian mining company received permission to operate a 50-sq.-km open-pit copper mine in the middle of Zambia's newest park. In 2014, the Zambia Environmental Management Agency rejected an environmental impact assessment submitted by the mining company, staying the project, but Zambia's government soon overturned the decision.

■ **RESPONSE:** AWF is registered as an interested party in opposing the mining. The Lusaka High Court recently issued an injunction to halt the project pending hearing of an appeal by plaintiffs.

■ **STATUS:** **Pending**



## Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park, South Africa

■ **KEY SPECIES:** Africa's "Big Five": lion, buffalo, elephant, leopard, rhino

■ **THREAT:** Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park may soon endure thunderous explosions, industrial lights at night, and particulate air pollution, thanks to Ubuthi Coal's proposed Fuleni open-pit mine, which is slated to operate between 30 m and 70 m from the park's southern boundary. Along with the risk of acid mine leachate tainting the White Umfolozi River, the large-scale development could lead to increased poaching within the park.

■ **RESPONSE:** AWF has registered a letter of opposition and is working with its South African partners to persuade the government to spare Hluhluwe-iMfolozi.

■ **STATUS:** **Pending**

# Wildlife Watch *African Grey Parrot*

BELOW: The African grey parrot is said to have the intelligence of an average 5-year-old human.



Jonker/Innemeer City parrots.org

As many parrot owners hear often enough Polly wants a cracker. In the case of the African grey parrot, however, Polly really just wants some protection.

Found primarily in the forested regions between East and West Africa, the African grey parrot—of which there are two

species—is one of the smartest birds, with an intelligence that is said to match that of a five-year-old human. They are adept at mimicry, have amazing memory recall, and can distinguish differences between bird calls and human voices. They've even been known to mimic household appliances!

A famous parrot by the name of Alex participating in an avian language experiment could use English words to differentiate between 100 colors, objects, and commands. He was even reported to understand the complex concept of zero, or “nothing.”

African grey parrots, aptly named for their grey coat that tapers into a bright red tail, are monogamous during their 70-year lifespan. The female lays a clutch of two to four eggs, which she incubates while the male gathers

nuts, vegetables, fruits, seeds, and other grains for her. Once hatched, the chicks are cared for by both parents.

The African grey's intelligence and ability to mimic have made it a popular pet among humans. The illegal pet trade, however, has rapidly diminished its wild population. Listed by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (or CITES) as “vulnerable,” the African grey parrot is consistently targeted for illegal capture as pets. Although the United States and various European countries have prohibited the sale of wild-caught grey parrots, 21 percent of the global population is still being harvested illegally for trade. The African grey's population decline is further compounded by the destruction of their forest habitat, mainly for timber and charcoal.

AWF is currently working with local communities across the African grey's range to protect permanent forest by reducing degradation caused by unsustainable agriculture practices and land clearing. —Mike Rooney

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### BLOG

## Remembering Satao

Earlier this year, one of Kenya's oldest elephants, Satao, was killed by poachers. In the midst of this terrible tragedy, we saw an outpouring of support from our community—on social media, in e-mails, through phone calls, and even in our blogs. Read our board chair's blog post in honor of Satao, and please join our communities to share your own conservation stories.

**Read the tribute:** [awf.org/satao-remembered](http://awf.org/satao-remembered)

### WEB



Manvra Ranch/rented.com

## A safari of a lifetime

For the third year in a row, AWF ran its annual Safari Sweepstakes, and in February, the lucky winner will be headed to Kenya with AWF on an epic African safari! Stay tuned for the announcement of our winner in the next issue and remember to enter yourself in next year's Sweepstakes.

**Don't wait for next year's Sweepstakes to go on safari with AWF! Visit [awf.org/awf-safaris](http://awf.org/awf-safaris)**

### VIDEO

#### View from above

Did you know that drones can be used to capture amazing footage of wildlife? Check out our aerial footage of Kenya's giraffes on our YouTube channel. And come back often, as we will be sharing additional footage with you.

**Check out the video at:** [awf.org/kenyas-giraffes](http://awf.org/kenyas-giraffes)



Billy Dodson