
SESSION TITLE:

A.O.B. AND CLOSE OF MEETING

Chairs: Holly Dublin, Bihini Won wa Musiti **Rapporteur:** Ruth Change

The A.O.B. highlights are as follows:

1. Iain Douglas-Hamilton proposed a resolution:

AfESG members note with concern the increases in poaching in Garamba National Park which constitute a grave threat to the remaining rhinos and elephants; AfESG encourages the government of Zaire and international donors to give the necessary support to deal with the situation.

2. Chris Thouless proposed another resolution, that a statement be published in Species:

Members of the AfESG note the controversy surrounding the publication of the report "Four Years after the Ban.." and regret the accidental omission of an IUCN disclaimer stating that the views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of IUCN or the other participating organisations and are not necessarily those of all members of AfESG. Members of the Group feel that the personal nature of the attacks on the authors and the doubts cast on their integrity were unjustified and inappropriate.

3. Colin Craig made a statement which he requested to have minuted:

We have seen the (video) presentation today on the translocation of elephants from Gonarezhou in Zimbabwe to South Africa. Most people seem agreed that this was the right thing to do. However, I would like to make it known to this Group that the decision to translocate those elephants has resulted in the suspension from duty of Dr. Willie Nduku, the Director of National Parks and Wild Life Management of Zimbabwe; and Assistant Director, Mr. R.B. Martin whom some of you know as a former member of this Group. It has also resulted in the withdrawal of all Mr. Coetsee's (translocation) permits.

I do not understand the reasons for the suspensions, but I interpret them as undermining the freedom of thought necessary to the rational decision-making process for management and conservation, and

that is why I am sufficiently concerned to want the facts minuted.

I stress that these opinions are my own and I do not expect the Group to support them.

4. Cynthia Moss reported that since the last AfESG meeting in 1994, Tanzania and Kenya have been in an unfortunate position regarding (hunting of) elephant bulls (from the Amboseli population). Tanzania has a legal hunting policy; Kenya does not have a policy. The press "blew up" the (hunting) incident - often being unfair to Tanzania - e.g. "Kenya's elephants being killed". None of us feel those are Kenyan elephants. They belong to a cross-border population. We must decide which is the best way to use elephants for both countries. We did not want to attack Tanzanian policy and we hope that we can resolve the issue.

Emmanuel Severre agreed that the bulls belonged to a cross-border population. There are no political boundaries for elephants. The issues in the press affected tourism in Tanzania. Hunting elephants in Tanzania is a way of conserving elephants in Tanzania. It facilitates better conservation in the wild. Hunting is now banned in Longido until we sit down with our Kenyan colleagues and discuss how to go further.

5. Holly Dublin said that during the meeting she noted the offer for a Taskforce (TF) to be set up on human-elephant conflict, which could be linked to the African Elephant Database (AED) project. She would be pleased for someone to take this forward. Richard Hoare volunteered.

6. Mike Fay pointed out that although issues concerning central Africa and forest elephant surveys have been discussed in the last three meetings, there is a need to consolidate the work from the independent studies going on in the region (WWF, WCS, IUCN) and there may be a need for another Taskforce. There are two major projects in the region, by USAID and the World Bank. Both will provide a good opportunity to raise money. There may be plenty of funds and we should especially think of using some in Zaire.

Holly Dublin agreed that there is strength in a regional approach. She suggested that Mike Fay should let the

secretariat know where it can assist. In terms of a TF, she asked that the people of the region organise themselves and let the secretariat know of any progress. We now have Lamine Sebogo working for the AfESG in Cameroon and she hopes that this will make it easier to communicate within the region.

7. Holly Dublin mentioned that the “hard” copy of the African Elephant Database now exists. She asked for ideas on how to carry out trend analysis and proposed that if trend analysis is to be done, we need to decide on how many populations should be analysed in order to make any comment at the continental level. She suggested that the best way to proceed would be for the “survey” people to present their ideas to the Group, after some initial homework on the subject.

David Cumming suggested that Iain Douglas-Hamilton could work voluntarily with the AED manager to agree on areas suitable for trend analysis, then circulate them to the Group. A small group could review the initial analysis and carry out some mathematical modelling.

8. Holly Dublin asked members to provide ideas for the venue of the next AfESG meeting. She suggested having the meeting somewhere in West/Central Africa. (This was the consensus by members who answered a small questionnaire.)

9. After thanks from the Chair and to the Chair, the meeting was closed.

Photo credit: Kes and Fraser Smith



A haul of tusks from 22 freshly-killed elephants in Garamba National Park Zaire, January 1996.