
number of members expressed discomfort with this. Therefore we solicited American Zoos Association for their view. A paper from Michael Hutchins was written for the Group on the subject which was discussed at the meeting.

The AfESG membership debated the role played by captive facilities in the conservation of the African elephant. The Group agreed on the following points which it asked the Chair to present formally to the American Zoos Association:

- AfESG recognises there is some role for captive facilities in the conservation of African elephants, through the fields of public education, scientific research, development of technologies, professional training and direct support to the conservation of the species in the field.
- AfESG also recognises the role that zoos and zoological societies play in mobilising public support for funding of these activities.

- However, the AfESG is concerned by the poor breeding success and low life expectancy of captive African elephants and does not see any contribution to the effective conservation of the species through captive breeding *per se*.
- Where African elephants are held in captivity, the AfESG believes that special care should be accorded to their physical and psychological well being.
- AfESG encourages captive facilities to maintain and expand field programmes directed to African elephant populations in African Range States, but wishes to point out that the holding of African elephants by a captive facility is not a necessary precursor for involvement in *in situ* African elephant conservation.

SESSION TITLE: A REVISIT TO THE IUCN RED LISTING OF THE AFRICAN ELEPHANT

Chair: N Leader-Williams

Rapporteurs: S Mainka, M K Sam

The Group agreed in 1996 that the African elephant should be listed as Endangered under the new IUCN Red Listing criteria. This listing was subsequently published by IUCN in Baillie and Groombridge (1996). However, a petition was received from Jon Hutton of the Africa Resources Trust that this listing was not appropriate, particularly for southern Africa, where many elephant populations were increasing and/or were strictly managed. Under procedures currently being developed by IUCN for appealing against listings, the first step in the process is for the listing authority, in this case the Group, to consider the merits of the petitioner's case, and determine if the listing should be revised.

Through debate, the only realistic alternative listing for the African elephant was in the category of Data Deficient. This was discussed at great length because, in the case of the African elephant, the current Red List criteria require that the population trend should be examined over 60 years, whereas the first continental estimate dates back only to 1979. Discussions centred on whether the moving window approach was valid for looking at these data.

Further discussions examined whether the taxonomy of the African elephant might be revised into two species, and therefore in future be listed separately. This was dismissed as a current consideration, as review of the data regarding genetic differences between the forest and savanna elephant is still ongoing.

After considerable debate, the Group decided by simple majority that the African elephant should remain listed as Endangered. This decision was reached for the following reasons:

- the new criteria for listing all species are currently under a process of further review by IUCN;
- under these criteria, most difficulty has been encountered in listing long-lived or widely distributed, but differentially impacted species, for which there is no clear evidence of declines over three generation lengths;
- the present criteria do not allow for national and regional listing; and,
- the various continental elephant estimates from 1979

to 1995 may not be strictly comparable. However, the Group noted the following caveats:

- it would wish to re-examine the continental listing of the African elephant after the new listing criteria have been approved;
- furthermore, it would hope to evaluate the listing at regional and/or national levels, once appropriate criteria had been developed;

- in addition, there is need to re-evaluate the population trends of the African elephants, by applying the same categorisation process that had been adopted by the African Elephant Database (AED) for the 1995 continental estimate, to those estimates available from 1979.

SESSION TITLE: MINUTED MEETING

Chair: H Dublin

Rapporteurs: L Sebogo, G Overton

The final half-day of the meeting was dedicated to a closed, minuted session. At this session, the members reviewed the decisions and findings of the week, and officially agreed to all resolutions.

The Group agreed upon decisions for:

- Recommendations from the data needs and site selection working groups
- DRTF members and Terms of Reference

- Data dissemination policy
- HETF members and Terms of Reference
- AfESG mission, objectives and activities
- Captive breeding of Elephants
- Current IUCN/SSC Listing of the African elephant

SESSION TITLE: AOB AND CLOSE OF MEETING

The participants from West and Central Africa thanked the Chair and for all the efforts to integrate the two sub-regions into the activities of the Group. They noted that the efforts are very important to allow the effective contribution of the two sub-regions into the workings of the Group.

A member expressed his gratitude to the US Fish and Wildlife Service for sponsoring all the members of the AfESG to attend the meeting and he also appreciated, on behalf of the Group, their efforts not only for this meeting, but all their efforts to assist Africa in the conservation of the elephant.