

FEDERAL MINISTRY OF  
ENVIRONMENT

# **NATIONAL ELEPHANT ACTION PLAN FOR NIGERIA**

**2024-2034**



## Disclaimer

This strategic document was prepared by the Wildlife Conservation Society and the Elephant Protection Initiative Foundation on behalf of the Federal Government of Nigeria.

The content of this document does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of WCS, EPIF or the Friedman French Foundation, nor does it imply any endorsement.

This publication has not been formally edited.

The National Elephant Action Plan (NEAP) for Nigeria is dedicated to the memory of John Mshelbwala who devoted his career to the conservation of elephants in Nigeria, but sadly passed away during the final production of the NEAP.

Cover page: Savanna elephants in Yankari Game Reserve. Author: R Bergl/NC Zoo.

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Savanna elephants in Yankari Game Reserve. Author: A Dunn/WCS

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Yankari elephants at sunset. Author: Nna-njar/WCS

# EPI Foreword



Stories of Nigeria's elephants are entwined through its people's rich history and celebrated in its world famous culture. But as this National Elephant Action Plan (NEAP) makes starkly clear, Nigeria's elephants are today in a very precarious situation, reduced to a few hundred in a handful of isolated populations. The 10 year plan outlined in this document may offer our last chance to save these magnificent animals.

This is a desperate, but not hopeless situation. This NEAP, the product of hard work and collaboration between committed conservationists and officials in Nigeria and abroad, lays out very clearly the measures we must take to conserve the remaining elephants.

This NEAP shows the need to close domestic ivory markets and tighten wildlife laws, and especially harmonise state and federal laws. This will benefit conservation in Nigeria itself, but will also have a positive impact on biodiversity in west and central Africa, given the country's significance as an export hub for illicit wildlife trafficking.

It also shows the need to upgrade law enforcement to protect Nigeria's elephants, and increase the protection status of certain areas. We need to involve people in surrounding areas in land use planning and conservation efforts, to mitigate the growing problem of humanelephant conflict.

The Elephant Protection Initiative Foundation is determined to play its part in this process. Since Nigeria joined the EPI in 2018, we've worked with its government to raise public awareness of elephant conservation, secure ivory stockpiles and, of course, develop this NEAP. It has been written in the spirit of our own Vision 2030, which aims for the harmonious coexistence of people and elephants. In so doing, we can protect a diverse range of wild animals and plants, combat climate change and support local livelihoods.

It's now or never for the country's remaining elephants. Let's all get behind the implementation of this excellent plan and save Nigeria's elephants.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'J' and 'S' followed by a long horizontal line.

**John E. Scanlon AO**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Elephant Protection Initiative  
Foundation



# Federal Ministry of Environment Foreword



Nigeria is endowed with abundant wildlife resources that are also integral parts of its natural ecosystem. Amongst such wildlife resources are the forest and savanna elephants which are on the brink of extinction due to human activities such as habitat destruction, poaching and other illegal activities in our forest. As a result of these illegal activities, this intelligent and socially complex creatures are now endangered species that needs to be protected and conserved.

Presently, there are less than five hundred (500) elephants in Nigeria, hence the establishment of the National Elephant Action Plan (NEAP) for Nigeria (2024-2034) aimed at providing the Federal Government with strategies capable of protecting and conserving this special wildlife. Globally, there are agitations for the protection of the remaining elephants and Nigeria is not an exception to this noble plan.

The full implementation of the National Elephant Action Plan will reduce and gradually eradicate the decline in population of Nigerian elephants. The plan is also aimed at building capacity, creating public awareness, monitoring and eradication of all illegal trade in elephant parts. It is also aimed at conservation and protection of the habitat of the wildlife to enable it reproduce in a conducive environment. The NEAP provides a platform for synergy between existing Federal and State wildlife laws in Nigeria as well as help in the enforcement of these

laws. The plan also plays a major role in support of the implementation of the National Strategy on Combating Illegal Wildlife and Forest Crime in Nigeria (2022-2026).

Regrettably, Nigeria has become a transit hub for trafficking of ivory across the region. In order to protect this endangered wildlife species, we collectively have to shut down the trade of ivory and other illegal activities in our forests, the ivory markets within and beyond our borders need to be closed down completely. We must therefore strengthen anti-poaching measures, promote habitat preservation, and foster peaceful coexistence between elephants and humans.

I commend the Elephant Protection Initiative Foundation (EPI), the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and other stakeholders for working tirelessly to actualize the National Elephant Action Plan (NEAP) for Nigeria (2024-2034). In the same vein, let's all join hands and implement this plan.

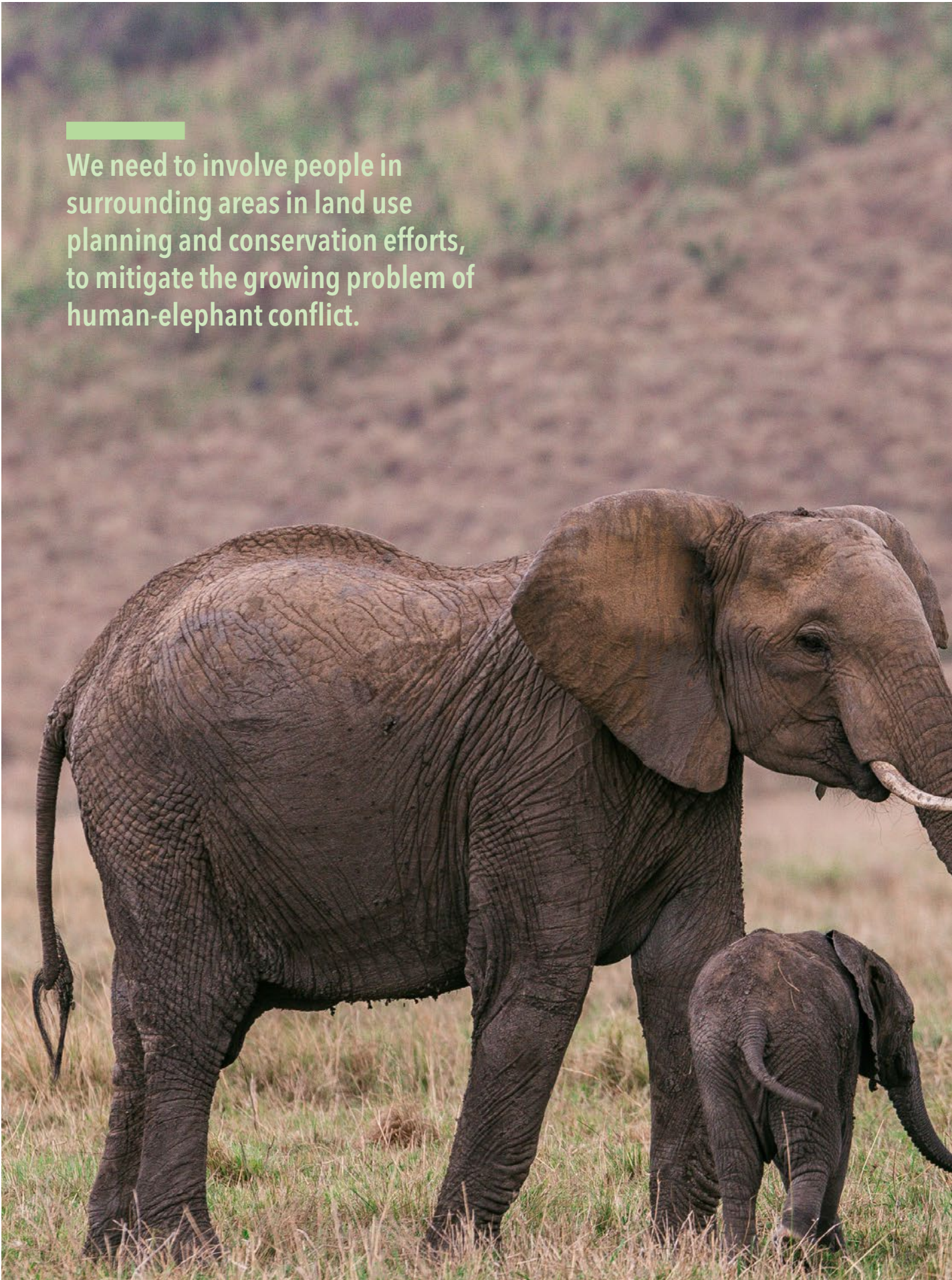
The Federal Government of Nigeria is committed to the sustainable management and conservation of the natural resources of the country. We are also looking forward to closely working together as well as, collaborating with relevant stakeholders in the implementation of the National Elephant Action Plan which will surely guarantee the survival of elephants and its habitat in Nigeria.

A handwritten signature in red ink, appearing to read 'Balarabe'.

**Balarabe Abbas Lawal**  
Minister, Federal Ministry of Environment.



We need to involve people in surrounding areas in land use planning and conservation efforts, to mitigate the growing problem of human-elephant conflict.







# Acknowledgements

Funding for development of the National Elephant Action Plan (NEAP) was provided by the Friedman French Foundation, through a grant to the Elephant Protection Initiative Foundation (EPIF), detailed in a sub-grant agreement between the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and EPIF. Printing of the NEAP document was funded by the European Union through the 'Support for the Preservation of Forest Ecosystems in Cross River State, Nigeria' project. The NEAP was developed following a participatory workshop involving a broad range of representatives of the key stakeholders (list in Appendix 3). Those individuals committed their time, expertise, and energy into developing and supporting the NEAP process. The Federal Department of Forestry, under the Federal Ministry of Environment is the lead agency for implementation of Nigeria's NEAP. Sincere thanks are due to everyone who contributed to create this important document.

The action plan drafting process was led by Andrew Dunn (WCS) and Hugo Jachmann (EPIF). Particular thanks are due to members of the African Elephant Specialist Group, and to the Wild Planet Trust, for their comments on the draft NEAP and to all participants from the NEAP workshop in June 2021.

All maps were produced by Frank Erhabor and Nna-njar Njar of the Nigeria Program of the Wildlife Conservation Society.

Design: Michael Lusaba | [me@michaellusaba.com](mailto:me@michaellusaba.com)



# List of Abbreviations

<b>AEAP</b>	African Elephant Action Plan	<b>NCF</b>	Nigerian Conservation Foundation
<b>AfESG</b>	African Elephant Specialist Group	<b>NCS</b>	Nigeria Customs Service
<b>ANI</b>	Africa Nature Investors	<b>NDC</b>	Nationally Determined Contributions
<b>BASG</b>	Bauchi State Government	<b>NDP</b>	National Development Plan
<b>BSG</b>	Borno State Government	<b>NDS</b>	National Development Strategy
<b>CITES</b>	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora	<b>NEAP</b>	National Elephant Action Plan
		<b>NEAPCC</b>	National Elephant Action Plan Coordination Committee
<b>CRNP</b>	Cross River National Park	<b>NESREA</b>	National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency
<b>CRSG</b>	Cross River State Government		
<b>EIA</b>	Environmental Investigation Agency	<b>NIAP</b>	National Ivory Action Plan
<b>ECOWAS</b>	Economic Community of West Africa	<b>NP</b>	National Park
<b>EPI</b>	Elephant Protection Initiative	<b>NPS</b>	National Park Service
<b>ESG</b>	Edo State Government	<b>OGSG</b>	Ogun State Government
<b>ETIS</b>	Elephant Trade Information System (CITES)	<b>OSG</b>	Ondo State Government
		<b>OOPC</b>	Okomu Oil Palm Company
<b>EWCT</b>	Erin Wildlife Conservation Trust	<b>PA</b>	Protected Area
<b>FC</b>	Focused Conservation	<b>PIKE</b>	Proportion of Illegally Killed Elephants
<b>FGN</b>	Federal Government of Nigeria	<b>RSG</b>	Rivers State Government
<b>FMEnv</b>	Federal Ministry of Environment	<b>SDG</b>	UN Sustainable Development Goals
<b>FR</b>	Forest Reserve	<b>SMART</b>	Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool
<b>FRIN</b>	Forestry Research Institute of Nigeria	<b>SNR</b>	Strict Nature Reserve
<b>GEF</b>	Global Environment Facility	<b>SWO</b>	Special Wildlife Office (Nigeria Customs Service)
<b>HEC</b>	Human Elephant Conflict		
<b>HWC</b>	Human Wildlife Conflict	<b>SWNDFP</b>	South-West Niger Delta Forest Project
<b>ICCWC</b>	International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime	<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
		<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>IUCN</b>	The International Union for the Conservation of Nature	<b>UNODC</b>	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
<b>KSG</b>	Kebbi State Government	<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development
<b>LGA</b>	Local Government Area		
<b>MIKE</b>	Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (CITES)	<b>WABCT</b>	West Africa Biodiversity Conservation Trust
<b>NARESCON</b>	Natural Resources Conservation Council	<b>WCS</b>	Wildlife Conservation Society
<b>NBSAP</b>	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan		



Savanna elephant in Yankari Game Reserve. Author: Ajibade Adedotun/WCS



# Executive Summary

Nigeria is one of relatively few countries in Africa to have both forest elephants (*Loxodonta cyclotis*) and savanna elephants (*Loxodonta africana*), although both are now much depleted. The population decline of both species in Nigeria started in the 19th century due to ivory demand from Europe, and in the 20th century the decline continued as their habitat was reduced due to agricultural expansion. As a result, elephants in Nigeria today are mainly restricted to protected areas and small forest fragments where they are increasingly isolated and vulnerable to extinction. In only 30 years, Nigeria's elephant population has crashed from an estimated 1,200 to 1,500 (NARESCON, 1991) to an estimated 300 to 400 today (IUCN, 2016).

Threats are growing, particularly from human elephant conflict, and without urgent action this trend will undoubtedly continue. Loss of connectivity between elephant populations and continued habitat loss are identified as a major threat to elephants in Nigeria.

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300 to 400 today**

IUCN, 2016



Camera trap photo of Yankari elephants. Author: WCS (Yankari)

Elephants are known from ten different sites in Nigeria, with an estimated total population size of 300-400 (this excludes the transboundary elephant herd that occasionally visits Borno State). The population comprises roughly 200-300 forest elephants and roughly 100 savanna elephants. Seven out of the ten known populations contain 50 or fewer elephants and are at serious risk of extinction. All the small populations are declining and only one elephant population is larger than 100, generally considered to be the minimum number for population viability. Although areas of suitable habitat do occur outside of existing protected areas, elephants only occupy roughly 10,000 km<sup>2</sup> of Nigeria, around 1% of the country. Elephants in Nigeria today can be considered as critically endangered.

An estimated 90% of Nigeria's elephants are found in or close to existing protected areas and only 10% occur outside of protected areas. The importance of the country's protected area network, particularly national parks, for the continued survival of elephants in Nigeria cannot be overemphasized. Two forest elephant populations occur in state-managed forest reserves (Omo and Idanre) that are subject to heavy logging pressure and farm encroachment, with weak levels of support from the state government. Two small forest elephant populations exist in unprotected sites (Itasin and Andoni) and are particularly vulnerable. Only four populations (Okomu, Oban, Okwangwo and Yankari) can be considered relatively safe.

Support for wildlife conservation by state governments is weak and declining, with rising levels of illegal logging and widespread encroachment of protected areas as a result. The status of smaller sites, including Idanre, Itasin, Andoni and Omo is extremely worrying. To save these vulnerable forest elephants from extinction, the legal status of the smaller sites must be urgently upgraded to protect them from illegal logging and farming. If the respective state governments are unable or unwilling to upgrade the sites, and to provide the required funding and political support, then they should be gazetted as national parks without further delay and managed by the federally funded National Park Service.

Although hunting and habitat loss have been the main cause of the decline of elephants in Nigeria, human elephant conflict (HEC) is a growing problem in the country and is now the main threat at several sites. HEC is expected to grow with increasing fragmentation of the remaining habitat, resulting in an exponential increase in the hard interface between humans and elephants. Levels of insecurity are

worsening in Nigeria and some protected areas, such as Sambisa Game Reserve and Kamuku National Park, have been taken over by terrorists or armed robbers. It is important that all national parks, game reserves and forest reserves are adequately protected and not allowed to become centres of insecurity. Well managed protected areas can help provide improved security for wildlife and local communities. Across northern Nigeria, with the loss of grazing reserves and traditional stock routes, many protected areas face growing pressure from transhumant pastoralists seeking grazing for livestock.

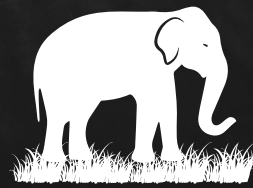
The plight of elephants in Nigeria is precarious, but there is growing commitment towards wildlife conservation, and there is still hope that they can be saved. Publication of the National Elephant Action Plan (NEAP) for Nigeria provides us with a blueprint for the future and contains all the priority actions needed to ensure the long-term survival of elephants in Nigeria, including strengthening protection of core sites by improving environmental law enforcement and security, emphasizing the importance of land-use planning to protect corridors and maintain connectivity between sites where possible, support for transboundary conservation, reducing human-elephant conflict, promoting a positive image of elephants, and continued research to learn more about the distribution and ecology of elephants in the country.

Coordinated by the Federal Ministry of Environment, this 10-year NEAP may be our last chance to stop the decline of elephants in Nigeria and save them from extinction. The world is facing unprecedented crises of biodiversity loss, climate change and global health. The National Elephant Action Plan for Nigeria helps tackle all three crises and offers real hope for a better future for the country where elephants and local communities can live harmoniously together. The NEAP also includes a five-year implementation plan, the total cost of which is estimated to be \$29,681,000. Saving Nigeria's last elephants will require more than just funds, it will require a significant change in attitude at all levels and a paradigm shift by federal and state governments towards a realization that human wellbeing and global health is inextricably linked to biodiversity loss and climate change. By outlining the necessary conservation actions and government commitment required, it is hoped that this plan will assist in raising those funds and saving Nigeria's last elephants.



**Nigeria** is one of relatively few countries in Africa to have both **forest elephants** and **savanna elephants**

An estimated **90%** of Nigeria's elephants are found in or close to existing protected areas and only **10%** occur outside of protected areas.



Elephants are known from ten different sites in Nigeria, with an estimated total population size of

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Although hunting and habitat loss are the main reasons for the decline of elephants in Nigeria, **Human Elephant Conflict (HEC)** is a growing problem in the country and is now the main threat at several sites.

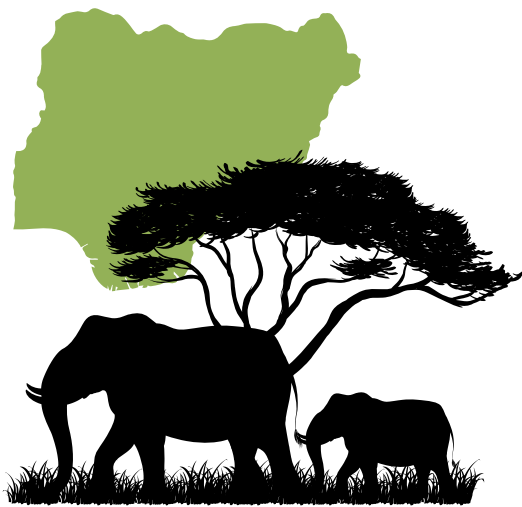
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# Introduction

The African elephant is the world's largest terrestrial mammal. It is a species of considerable economic, ecological, cultural, and aesthetic value to many people and is arguably the world's most charismatic mega-herbivore. African elephants possess extraordinary intelligence, complex social structures, and remarkable abilities to adapt to their surroundings. They play a pivotal role in African ecosystems as unique 'keystone' species and natural habitat engineers, while providing an environmental focus for fundraising, awareness building and stimulating action for broader conservation efforts. Africa's elephants represent strength and power for many cultures on the continent and attract visitors from across the globe.



The future for African elephants is far from secure. Elephants face a multitude of very serious threats, including illegal killing for ivory and other products, loss, and fragmentation of habitat, and increasing conflict with humans. The magnitude of these threats, for some elephant populations, is so severe that many predict these populations may be lost entirely. The numerous threats posed to elephants are therefore of deep concern to all African elephant range States.



**Nigeria is one of relatively few countries in Africa to have both forest elephants (*Loxodonta cyclotis*) and savanna elephants (*Loxodonta africana*).**

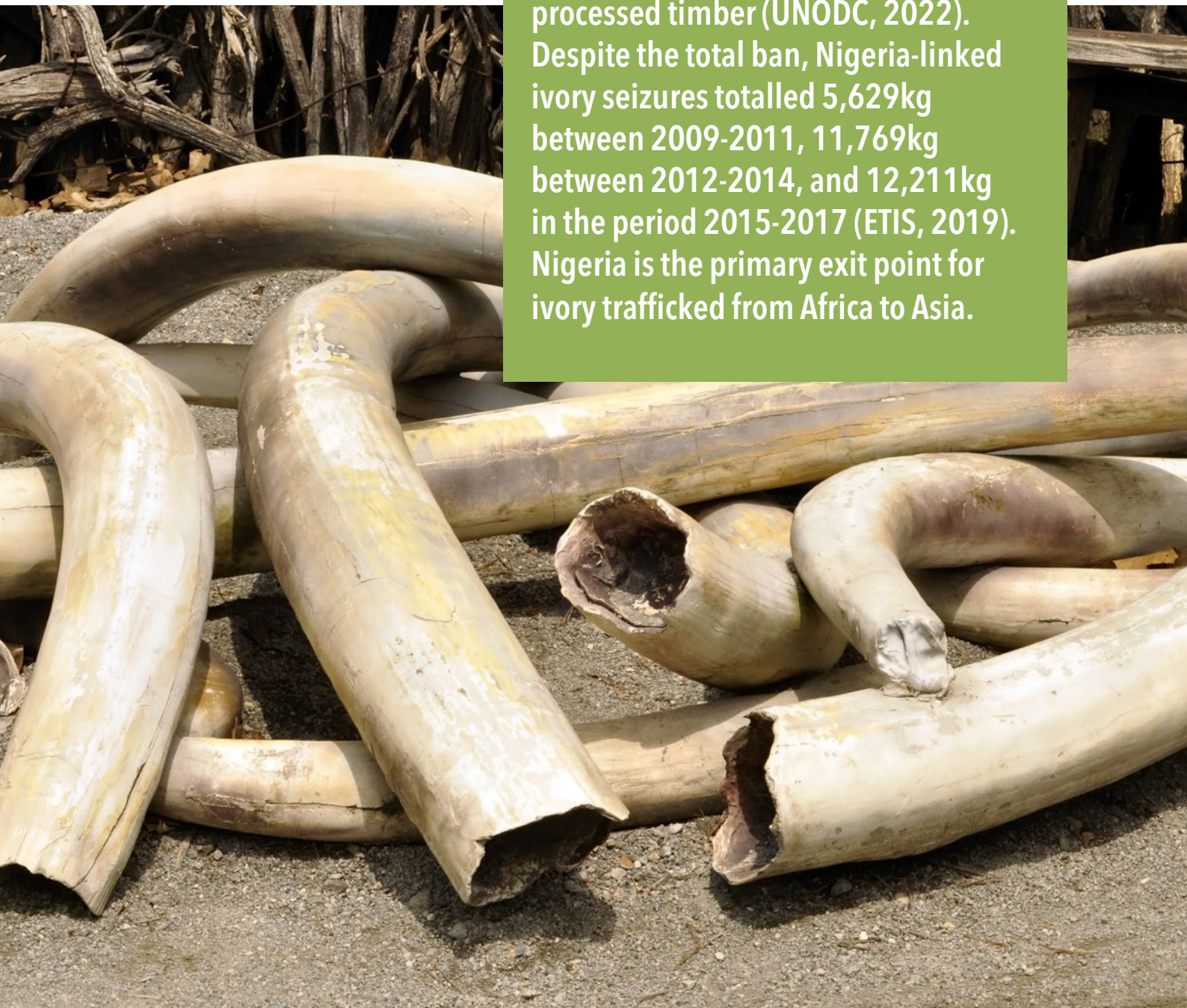
Nigeria is one of relatively few countries in Africa to have both forest elephants (*Loxodonta cyclotis*) and savanna elephants (*Loxodonta africana*). IUCN recently classified the forest elephant as “critically endangered” and the savanna elephant as “endangered” (IUCN, 2021). The population decline of both species in Nigeria started in the 19th century due to ivory demand from Europe, and in the 20th century the decline continued as their habitat was reduced to only a fraction of its potential range due to human population growth and agricultural expansion. As a result, elephants in Nigeria today are mainly restricted to existing protected areas and remaining forest fragments where they are increasingly isolated and vulnerable to extinction. Nigeria’s strong commitment to conservation led to the creation of eight national parks of which four contain either forest or savanna elephants. Unfortunately, none of the ten newly proposed national parks still support elephants.

The genetics of elephants in West Africa is poorly understood and we lack data on the genetic relationships between forest elephants in West Africa and those in Central Africa, or between the savanna elephants of West Africa and those of eastern and southern Africa. Biologists recognise that a species’ genetic diversity must be preserved if it is to retain its evolutionary potential to adapt to a changing world. Therefore, with the current dearth of information on this topic, it would be prudent to preserve the full range of elephant genetic material in West Africa. Elephants also have behaviour patterns that have evolved in different environments. Until we understand more about the variations in behaviour patterns in different parts of the sub-region, and how they change as human pressures increase and habitats shrink, it would again be wise to conserve the full range of behavioural diversity.

<sup>1</sup> Yankari National Park reverted to the status of game reserve in 2006. Nigeria has seven national parks, with ten additional parks in the process of establishment.

Nigeria has emerged as a key source, destination, and transit country for international Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) over the last decade, with organized criminal networks exploiting a variety of illegal products from West and Central Africa and consolidated in Nigeria before being shipped overseas. The wildlife products range widely, and while precise volumes of illegal trade are difficult to identify, seizure data has shown the scale of illegal trade and the recent growth in the role of Nigeria as a consolidation hub for global IWT.

As an example, a single seizure by the Nigeria Customs Service in January 2021 contained 2,772 pieces of elephant tusks, weighing 4,752kg; 162 sacks of pangolin scales, weighing 5,329kg; 5kg of rhino horn; 103kg of skulls suspected to be of lions and other wild cats; and 76 pieces of processed timber (UNODC, 2022). Despite the total ban, Nigeria-linked ivory seizures totalled 5,629kg between 2009-2011, 11,769kg between 2012-2014, and 12,211kg in the period 2015-2017 (ETIS, 2019). Nigeria is the primary exit point for ivory trafficked from Africa to Asia.





Ivory is predominantly sourced from countries across West and Central Africa, and although some is sold into local markets, most of the ivory is exported, predominantly to Viet Nam and China. Nigeria developed a National Ivory Action Plan in 2015, and although there have been some successes, unregulated domestic trade in ivory remains, while despite various seizures, there have been limited successful prosecutions of individuals involved in the ivory trade (UNODC, 2022).

Although Nigerian craftsmen and traders have been dealing in elephant ivory for centuries, it was not until 1989, however, that the first detailed study of Nigeria's ivory market took place. At the time most of the ivory was smuggled in from Central Africa and most ivory items for sale were carved in Onitsha and Lagos, mainly by foreigners from neighbouring countries. Lagos was the main centre in Nigeria for the sale of worked ivory. A series of further surveys documented a steady increase in the trade and ivory carving workshops, and there was an almost three-fold increase in ivory items for retail sale in Lagos between 2002 and 2012, primarily to meet Chinese demand. Furthermore, although it was recognised that almost all domestic ivory trade was illegal, regulations were rarely if ever enforced. Owing to the lack of enforcement, a CITES ban was enforced on Nigeria in 2005, which was finally rescinded in 2011. The continued availability of both raw and worked ivory in Nigeria is contributing to the serious impact that such trade is having on the elephant populations of Central and West Africa (Esmond and Vigne, 2013). Additional surveys in 2017-2018 found that the trade continued unabated, especially in the Lekki market of Lagos (Nkoke, 2019).

### The main challenges for the long-term conservation of elephants in Nigeria are



**Urgent safeguarding of those populations deemed to be most at risk;**



**Strengthening Nigeria's ports and borders to combat illegal wildlife trade;**



**Closure of the domestic ivory trade; and**



**Need to reconcile growing development with the needs of elephants as well as gaining public support for elephant conservation.**

## 1.1 Historical decline of elephants in West Africa and in Nigeria in particular

In classical times elephants were found throughout West Africa, from the coastal forests to the fringes of the Sahara (Scullard, 1974). They have long been hunted for their ivory, which for centuries was traded across the Sahara to the ports of North Africa (Wilson & Ayerst, 1976).

Later, ivory was carried towards the Atlantic coasts and sold to European traders. Hunting for ivory increased during the 19th century, especially after 1870, when the colonial powers moved inland and established roads and railways that facilitated the transport of ivory (Alpers, 1992). Ivory exports continued to grow in volume until about 1910 when the elephant population collapsed due to over-hunting (Roth & Douglas-Hamilton, 1991).

Elephant numbers did not recover in West Africa after World War I as they did elsewhere on the continent (Spinage, 1973). During the 20th century human populations grew exponentially. Expanding roads, villages, towns, and farms have caused a rapid loss of the natural vegetation cover and widespread disturbance to remaining habitats. The growth of the logging industry opened forests to settlement and other forms of human land use (Roth & Douglas-Hamilton, 1991; Dougherty, 1994). Between 1900 and the mid-1980s, it was estimated that the elephant range in West Africa declined by 93% (Roth & Douglas-Hamilton, 1991).


During the 1980s, ivory poaching increased in the sub-region, as it did also in Central and East Africa. There are few data illustrating the impact on West African elephants, but Côte d'Ivoire lost half of its forest elephants during that decade (Merz & Hoppe-Dominik, 1991). Ivory export records reflect the steep decline in elephant numbers during the last century: during 1979-88, the average volume of ivory exported annually from the countries of the former Afrique Occidentale Française was less than 1% of that recorded during 1890-1914 (data from Douglas-Hamilton (1979) and Luxmoore et al. (1989)).

Surprisingly, there is little information on the status, abundance, and distribution of elephants in Nigeria prior to 1930 (Happold, 1987). In 1826, the explorer Hugh Clapperton reported that elephants were numerous around Lake Chad in herds numbering fifty to four hundred individuals. Elephants were quite common in the Benue valley in 1900-1910 but not as numerous as in 1880-1890 before the rinderpest epidemic killed many cattle and wildlife, including elephants ('Bunsuru' 1959).

By the early 1950s, there was a herd of eight elephants in the Benue-Pai River region and another herd of 15 between Tunga and Wase, but by 1964, there was only the occasional elephant remaining (Sikes, 1964). In south-eastern Nigeria a similar decline occurred. Before 1900, elephants were said to be extremely common in Owerri province and in the forest regions of eastern Nigeria (Heslop, 1935), but by 1930 elephants were uncommon and confined to less inhabited areas of the country (Happold, 1987).

Elephants were reported from the Niger Delta and moved north in the wet season when the area flooded (Shorthose, 1932). By the time Cozens and Marchant (1952) surveyed the area, elephants had completely disappeared from Owerri Province. Although elephants were generally distributed throughout the

country, many herds had regular seasonal migrations alternating between a wet season habitat and a dry season habitat. Unfortunately, the extensive migrations that were once a feature of Nigerian elephants, are mostly curtailed or no longer occur. Elephant populations have decreased greatly during the twentieth century and many of the known herds have either become extinct or are much reduced in numbers and are now confined to small areas of their original home ranges. This general pattern of decline is like other areas in Africa, and is the inevitable result of increasing human populations, agriculture, and settlement (Happold, 1987). In the last fifty years, large elephant populations that once existed in Kainji Lake National Park and Sambisa<sup>2</sup> Game Reserve/ southern Borno State have completely disappeared (NARESCON, 1991; Omondi et al., 2006).



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2 Sambisa formerly supported 450-600 elephants which was once considered to be the healthiest elephant population in the country (NARESCON, 1991).



## 1.2 Institutional set up and supporting legislative framework

### 1.2.1. Relevant Federal Institutions

**The Federal Ministry of Environment (FMEnv)** is the overarching institute in charge of environmental protection, natural resources conservation and sustainable development, while restoring and maintaining ecosystems, ecological processes and preserving biodiversity. Their mandate also involves raising public awareness and promoting understanding of environmental linkages. FMEnv cooperates with other relevant ministries, departments and agencies, the private sector, NGOs, and international organizations on environmental matters.

**The Forestry Research Institute of Nigeria (FRIN)** was established as the Federal Department of Forestry Research in 1954. The Institute's Decree 35 of 1973 and order of 1977 changed the status of the Department to an institute supervised by the FMEnv. FRIN has seven specialized research departments: Sustainable Forest Management, Forest Product Development & Utilization, Forest Conservation & Protection, Forest Economics & Extension, Environmental Modelling & Management, and Wildlife & Tourism, three support departments, ten outstations spread across all ecological zones of the country, three service units and four colleges. FRIN has a mandate to conduct research into all aspects of forestry, forest products utilization, wildlife, watershed management and agroforestry.

**The National Park Service (NPS)** is a parastatal under FMEnv and is responsible for managing seven<sup>3</sup> national parks throughout the various ecological zones of Nigeria. Each of these parks has its own unique biophysical attributes, covering a total land area of approximately 20,156 km<sup>2</sup>, or about 3% of the country's total land area. Each of the parks is headed by a Conservator of Park under the guidance of a Park Management Committee. The Conservator-General is the Chief Executive Officer of the NPS and there is a 14-member Governing Board led by a Chairman who is responsible for determining the policy direction of the Service. In the present democratic dispensation, Act 46 of 1999 is the legal instrument under which the parks and their head offices are administered. The seven National Parks are on the Exclusive Legislative List of the Constitution and are therefore controlled and managed by the Federal Government being the highest legal authority in the land.

#### The objectives of the NPS are as follows:

- Conservation of selective and representative samples of wildlife communities in Nigeria;
- Establishment of an ecologically and geographically balanced network of protected areas under the jurisdiction and control of the Federal Government;
- Protection of endangered species of wild plants and animals and their habitats;
- Conservation of wildlife throughout Nigeria so that the abundance and diversity of their species are maintained at the optimum level commensurate with other forms of land use, in order to ensure the continued existence of wildlife for the purpose of their sustainable utilization for the benefit of the people;
- Preservation of outstanding scenic, natural, scientific, recreational and other values in the National Parks, and;
- Protection and maintenance of crucial wetlands and water catchment's areas.

**The National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NESREA)** is a parastatal under the auspices of the FMEnv. Their mandate includes protection of the environment, enforcement of laws and regulations on the environment, maintaining environmental standards, and creating environmental awareness.

**Key institutions instrumental in combating wildlife crime** and environmental crime in general are the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS), World Customs Union, National Central Bureau (INTERPOL), Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU) and the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC).

<sup>3</sup> An additional 10 new national parks were announced in 2020 but are not yet operational.

### 1.2.2. State-level Institutions

Nigeria is a federal republic of 36 states and a federal capital territory, each state is a semi-autonomous political unit that shares power with the federal government. State governments are responsible for the management of wildlife conservation outside of the national parks. The main problem concerning wildlife conservation at the state level is the lack of political will and commitment to conservation, the lack of resources allocated for the management and protection of forest reserves, game reserves and wildlife sanctuaries, and the disparity between state wildlife laws and federal wildlife laws. For an adequate criminal justice response to poaching and trafficking of ivory and other wildlife products, harmonisation of state-level laws to achieve parity with each other and at the federal level is urgently required (EIA, 2021).



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The Forest Act of 1937 gave each State Governor or Local Government Authority, the authority to constitute its own forest reserves and over 1,000 were created in Nigeria. Unfortunately, most of these forest reserves exist on paper only and many have been converted to agriculture.

The Federal Department of Forestry holds no executive authority in the management of forest reserves and other forest lands and only has a monitoring function. The management and control of forest reserves is thus vested in the State Governments, with the result that the overall control of many existing forest reserves and game reserves is not effective. Moreover, there exist overlapping responsibilities of the Federal and State Government, Local Councils, and the various multi-purpose parastatals for forest resources. There are also several non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) that contribute to the sustainable management of forestry resources.

### 1.2.3. Legislative Framework

At the federal level, the laws governing international wildlife trafficking in Nigeria are relatively weak as compared to jurisdictions in East and Southern Africa (Jayanathan, 2021). The Nigeria Endangered Species (Control of International Trade and Traffic) Amendment Act 2015 provides for the conservation and management of Nigeria's wildlife and the protection of some of her wildlife species in danger of extinction because of over-exploitation, as required under certain international treaties to which Nigeria is a signatory.

These laws prohibit and spell out some degrees of punishment for offenders. The law states that:

**Prohibition of hunting of or trading in wild animals,** this means that no person shall hunt, capture, trade-in, or otherwise deal with an animal species specified to be an endangered species, being animals which, though not necessarily now threatened with extinction, may become so threatened unless trade in respect of such species is controlled.

**Regulation of export and import of species specified as endangered species animals,** this states that no person shall trade in any animal specified under the Endangered Species act of 2014 as amended.

The law requires a thorough review alongside the National Forestry Policy and the draft National Park Act to ensure harmonisation in terms of criminal offences (Jayanathan, 2021) together with the harmonization of state and federal laws.



For an adequate criminal justice response to poaching and trafficking of ivory and other wildlife products, harmonisation of state-level laws to achieve parity with each other and at the federal level is urgently required

EIA, 2021



Confiscated firearms, Yankari Game Reserve. Author: Natalie Ingle/WCS



### 1.2.4. The Way Forward

Nigeria is still an important source and key transit country for the shipment of protected species and products and has an increasing role in the illicit ivory trade with almost a quarter of all ivory seized worldwide having been shipped through Nigerian ports. Therefore, it has become critically important to adopt a more cohesive, coordinated, and robust approach to combat wildlife and forest crime in Nigeria.

It is within this context that the Government of Nigeria under the leadership of the FMEnv and with the support of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Government of Germany has recently completed the first ever ‘National Strategy to Combat Wildlife and Forest Crime in Nigeria 2022-2026’. The five-year Strategy articulates Nigeria’s vision in relation to the illegal wildlife trade – A Nigeria Free of Wildlife Crime. The strategy has been developed within the context of the Project “Strengthening Nigeria’s Response to the Trafficking of Wildlife and Forestry Products” which is funded by the Government of Germany and implemented by UNODC in partnership with the FMEnv, the Nigeria Customs Service, the National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NESREA), as well as other state and non-state actors.

The project compliments the support of the European Union to the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICWC) to undertake a comprehensive assessment of Nigeria’s preventive and criminal justice response to wildlife and forest crime, using the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife

Crime (ICWC) Analytical Toolkit and ICWC Indicator Framework as well as Corruption Risk Assessments of the wildlife and forest sectors in Nigeria.

The strategy defined seven objectives designed to effectively address transnational and domestic wildlife crime which include:

- 1. Enhance Institutional Capabilities** – will ensure all frontline institutions have the capacity to understand, detect and deter wildlife crime.
- 2. Strengthen the Legal Framework** – enable harmonised and strengthened legal framework to deter wildlife crime and enable sustainable trade.
- 3. Increase collaboration** – will ensure more effective coordination nationally and internationally to combat wildlife crime.
- 4. Honour Commitments** – will seek to ensure compliance with national and international commitments to regulate legal trade and combat wildlife crime.
- 5. Remove Crime Enablers** – aimed at preventing corruption and financial crime which enable wildlife crime to thrive.
- 6. Raise Awareness of Wildlife Crime** – generate social and political will by raising awareness to the value of nature and the threat posed by wildlife crime.
- 7. Alternative Livelihoods** – empower local communities through developing wildlife crime prevention initiatives.



Logging truck, Omo Forest Reserve. Author: R Bergl



## 1.3 NEAP Development Process

Development of the National Elephant Action Plan (NEAP) for Nigeria was facilitated by the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and the Elephant Protection Initiative Foundation (EPIF), working in close collaboration with the Federal Ministry of the Environment and other stakeholders. The participatory process was launched in June 2021, with a two-day stakeholder workshop held at the National Park Headquarters in Abuja. This workshop brought together 20 representatives (see Annex 3) from the Federal Ministry of Environment, the National Park Service and five state governments as well as four different NGOs.

A total of 11 different elephant sites were represented at the workshop, which discussed status, threats, and trends of elephant populations at each site as well as priority actions required to safeguard their long-term survival. After the workshop an editorial committee was established to guide production of the NEAP, including TD John (Federal Ministry of Environment), Henry Ndoma (National Park Service), Dr. Stella Egbe (Nigerian Conservation Foundation), Rachel Ashegbofe (SW Niger Delta Forest Project), John Mshelbwala (consultant and elephant expert) and Tunde Morakinyo (Africa Nature Investors) and was coordinated by Andrew Dunn (WCS). The committee is indebted to Dr. Hugo Jachmann (EPIF) for his overall guidance and support during the production of the NEAP, as well as members of the African Elephant Specialist Group and the Wild Planet Trust for their comments. Funding for the NEAP process was provided by the Friedman French Foundation, through a grant to the EPIF, detailed in a sub-grant agreement between WCS and EPIF. Printing of the NEAP document was funded by the European Union as part of the 'EU Support for the Preservation of

### The NEAP has benefitted from several existing reports and documents, including:

- CITES (2010). African Elephant Action Plan.
- Elephant Conservation Plan for Nigeria (1991). Natural Resources Conservation Council (NARESCON).
- National Ivory Action Plan for Nigeria. Department of Forestry, Federal Ministry of Environment.
- EPIF (2019) Monitoring & Evaluation Framework for NEAPs.
- EPIF (2021). Guidelines and Standards for National Elephant Action Plans (Version 5.0).

- IUCN (2017). Guidelines for Species Conservation Planning.
- IUCN (2016). African Elephant Status Report (2016).
- IUCN (2005). Strategy for the Conservation of West African Elephants.
- Federal Ministry of Environment (2015). National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) 2016-2020.
- TRAFFIC Bulletin Vol. 31 No. 1 (2019) and Bulletin Vol.25 No. 1 (2013).
- UNODC Nigerian National Strategy on Wildlife and Forest Crime 2022-2026.
- Jayanathan, S. (2021). Combating Wildlife Crime in Nigeria: an analysis of the Criminal Justice Legislative Framework. Arcturus Consultancy Ltd. Africa Nature Investors Foundation and Environmental Investigation Agency (UK).

Forest Ecosystems in Cross River State' project.

## 1.4 Integrating Nigeria's NEAP with the Sustainable Development Goals

The international donor community as well as private and public institutions, are under increasing pressure to focus funding to support the implementation of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their targets. Given the potential impact of NEAP implementation on SDG 1 (End Poverty), SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 6 (Clean Water & Sanitation), SDG 8 (Decent Work & Economic Growth), SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), SDG 12 (Ensure Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns), SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 15 (Life on Land), SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions), and, SDG 17 (Partnerships for the SDGs), an integrated approach should be adopted, whereby a NEAP must identify SDGs to which it contributes.

Therefore, it is important that Nigeria's NEAP is also fully integrated with the UN Sustainable Development Goals as well as biodiversity-related conventions (through the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan). An integrated approach allows for synergies between actions on biodiversity, climate change and resilience. This approach is essential to reconcile



development needs and priorities to promote socio-economic development to reduce poverty, while at the same time mitigating the impact of climate change and conserving biodiversity (See Appendix 1, Mapping the SDGs against the objectives of Nigeria's NEAP).

The African Elephant Action Plan (AEAP) was adopted in March 2010 at the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES. The document was developed in response to a Decision of the CITES Parties to develop such a plan and a fund to assist with its implementation. The Plan was developed

over two years through a consultative process, facilitated by the African Elephant Specialist Group (AfESG) and the CITES Secretariat. The AEAP is fully owned and managed by the African elephant range States and outlines the actions that must be taken to effectively conserve elephants. Thus, the AEAP is a concise and clear statement of activities that most urgently require funding. Therefore, a critical part of seeking funding for the NEAPs is making sure that the prioritization and costing of activities being selected are aligned to the AEAP objectives, in other words, it is vital that NEAP objectives link to AEAP objectives.



Elephant collaring exercise in Yankari GR. Author: WCS



# 2.0

# Implementation of the National Elephant Action Plan

The National Elephant Action Plan for Nigeria is an officially approved government strategy developed by the Federal Ministry of the Environment to ensure the necessary coordination and follow-up required for its timely implementation. The NEAP is designed to be a tool for planning and monitoring elephant conservation measures and will serve as a framework for the strategies and decision-making of all relevant government institutions, donor agencies and NGOs.

The NEAP will serve as a reference for NGOs, INGOs and donors to implement actions consistent with the NEAP and the priorities defined by the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Moreover, the NEAP will provide the necessary strategic framework for the coordination of all actors involved in elephant conservation and management, including government institutions, NGOs/INGOs, private sector partners and the local communities living with elephants. The NEAP is a flexible document, and its strategy will evolve with new threats, new challenges, and new opportunities. The mechanism for the implementation of the NEAP is as follows:

- **National Elephant Action Plan Coordinator.** Appointment of a NEAP Coordinator who will act as the focal point within the Federal Ministry of Environment to coordinate implementation of the NEAP and coordination of the National Elephant Action Plan Coordination Committee (NEAPCC).

The NEAP Coordinator will liaise closely with the EPI National Focal Point within the Federal Department of Forestry (who is responsible for effective communication with the EPI Foundation) and with the NIAP Coordinator.

- **National Elephant Action Plan Coordination Committee.** Appointment of a National Elephant Action Plan Coordination Committee (NEAPCC) whose responsibilities include promoting the NEAP, monitoring implementation, and assessing progress with the NEAP's five-year implementation plan.
- **Monitoring.** The NEAP Coordinator and NEAPCC will monitor implementation of the NEAP's five-year implementation plan, especially with the means of verification and targets.
- **Fundraising.** Fundraising to ensure the full implementation of the NEAP is vitally important. Most of the priority activities in the NEAP (see Chapter 5) should be funded by the Federal Government of Nigeria and by the respective state governments, with any gaps identified to be funded by international donors and NGOs. Unfortunately, wildlife conservation is not a high priority in Nigeria, government resources are limited, and donor funding is often linked to complex procedures. The EPI Foundation will use its best endeavors to assist member states in seeking funding for medium-term high-priority actions (EPIF, 2021).
- **Communication.** The NEAP Coordinator and the NEAPCC will support communicating results of NEAP implementation periodically to government and donors. Continued support may depend on timely and accurate description of activities that demonstrate progress, if not necessarily impacts (IUCN, 2017; EPIF, 2019). Use of social media is also recommended to raise public awareness of elephant conservation and help communicate results from the implementation and monitoring of the NEAP.









# 3.0

## Status of Elephants in Nigeria

The African elephant is the planet's largest terrestrial mammal and is a majestic symbol of the African continent. Unfortunately, West Africa lost more than 90% of its elephant range during the 20th century, and today most elephant populations are small and isolated (IUCN, 2005). In Nigeria the once-widespread elephant population is now fragmented into small groups, and numbers have been declining since the 19th century.



Both savanna elephants and forest elephants occur in Nigeria and occupy a range of habitats from swamps and humid forest in the south to the arid Sahel in the north. There are few good estimates of elephant numbers in Nigeria and most of the current estimates are best guesses rather than the results of scientific surveys. These estimates suggest that most populations are small, consisting of fewer than 50 elephants, and with a high risk of extinction. Although a much higher proportion of the original elephant population has been lost in Nigeria than elsewhere, a concerted effort must be made to conserve the remaining elephants because of their cultural significance, tourism value and ecological importance:

**Cultural Significance.** Because of its strength, wisdom, and conquering spirit the elephant has become an emblem to identify many institutions in Nigeria, including the oldest bank in the country and the Nigerian Police Force. There are many beliefs associated with elephants. They feature in many traditional stories and folklore, and they are a source of inspiration for many. Elephant tusks are traditionally used as a symbol of authority among the Igbo and small tusks are often carried as a badge of office by high-ranking chiefs. The elephant is therefore a powerful and ubiquitous symbol, and its disappearance would represent a great loss to Nigerian traditional culture.

**Tourism Value.** The elephant is also a species of great economic importance. The demand for ivory caused precipitous population declines across the continent and there are now strict controls upon the international ivory trade. Elephants' economic importance as ivory producers has been replaced by their ability to attract tourists. Tourism is now one of the world's most important industries and an effective tourist industry is essential for expanding the economies of developing countries and elephants are often the animal species that overseas tourists most wish to see.

**Ecological Importance.** The ecological importance of elephants in the West African savannas has been largely ignored, although it has long been recognised in East Africa, for example in opening up bush and reducing the abundance of tsetse fly, and in increasing the diversity of plants and herbivorous mammals. Elephants are also thought to play a key role in maintaining the diversity of plants and animals in the forest environment: helping to create a patchwork of

forest types by opening up the understory, slowing down the closure of canopy gaps caused by falling trees, and dispersing seeds over long distances.

Additionally, elephants roam over large expanses of forest and savanna and protecting this species and their habitat helps to protect other less charismatic species as well as helping to slow the rate of deforestation and mitigate against the effects of climate change (Chami et al., 2019; Chami et al., 2020).

### 3.1 Status Review

Elephants are known from 10 different sites in Nigeria, see Table 1 and Map 1 below, with an estimated total population size of 300 - 400<sup>4</sup> (this excludes the transboundary elephant herd that occasionally visits Borno State). The population comprises of roughly 200 - 300 forest elephants and roughly 100 savanna elephants. These elephants occupy roughly 10,000 km<sup>2</sup> of Nigeria today, around 1% of the country. Seven out of the ten known populations contain 50 or fewer elephants and so can be considered at serious risk of extinction. Only one elephant population is larger than 100, generally considered to be the minimum number for population viability.

Although these estimates are mostly guesses, they illustrate how the formerly widespread elephant population of Nigeria has been reduced to several small, isolated populations. These densities are much lower than those seen elsewhere on the continent and likely reflect heavy hunting in the past.

Eight of the populations are now isolated and restricted to a small area of available habitat, two of them are transboundary in nature. Some of the large savanna elephant populations of recent times such as Sambisa Game Reserve, Kainji Lake National Park, Kamuku<sup>5</sup> National Park and Kwiambana Game Reserve have now been extirpated. Smaller forest elephant populations in Taylor's<sup>6</sup> Creek Forest Reserve and Ifon Forest Reserve have also recently disappeared.

4 IUCN's 2016 African Elephant Status Report estimated the country's remaining population at somewhere between 263 and 557.

5 It is claimed that elephants may still be present in the general area surrounding Kamuku National Park/Kwiambana Game Reserve in Kaduna State/Zamfara State. Reconnaissance surveys are needed although levels of insecurity in the region are very high. In 1987 there was a herd of 200 elephants moving between Kaduna and Sokoto States although at the time it was recognized that the only chance for their long-term survival in the area was Kamuku (NARESCON, 1991). There have been no elephant sightings in Kamuku since 2019.

6 It is believed that the last elephant was killed in Taylor's Creek in 2004.

**Table 1: The status of elephants in Nigeria**

	Site	PA Status	Species	Estimated Size	Population Status	Main threats
1	Oban	NP	Forest	<50	Decreasing	HEC, poaching, logging
2	Okwangwo*	NP	Forest	<50	Decreasing	HEC, poaching, logging
3	Okomu	NP	Forest	40-50	Decreasing	Logging, HEC, insecurity, poaching
4	Omo	FR	Forest	50-70	Decreasing	Habitat loss, HEC, logging, poaching
5	Itasin	none	Forest	30-35	Decreasing	HEC, poaching, logging
6	Andoni	none	Forest	<10	Decreasing	HEC, poaching
7	Idanre	FR	Forest	10-20	Decreasing	Habitat loss, HEC, poaching
8	Yankari	GR	Savanna	100	Stable	HEC
9	Borno*	none	Savanna	250	Decreasing	HEC, insecurity
10	Nigeria-Benin border	none	Savanna	2-3	-	HEC

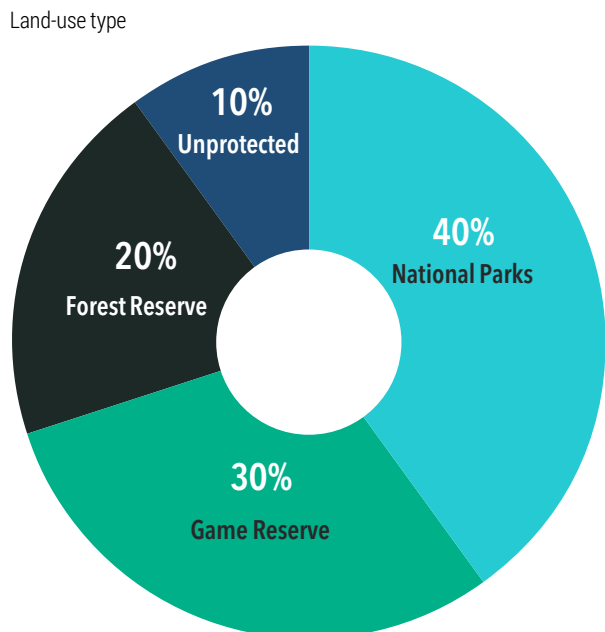
\* The elephant populations in the Okwangwo Division of Cross River National Park and Borno are both transboundary in nature.



An estimated 90% of Nigeria's elephants are found in or close to existing protected areas

If one discounts the transboundary elephant population around Lake Chad (which are only temporary visitors to Nigeria), six elephant populations are found within existing protected areas (Oban, Okwangwo, Okomu, Omo, Idanre and Yankari) and three are found within unprotected areas (Itasin, Andoni and Nigeria-Benin border). An estimated 90% of Nigeria's elephants are found in or close to existing protected areas and only 10% occur within unprotected areas (Figure 1) emphasising the importance of the country's protected area network for the continued survival of elephants in Nigeria.

**Figure 1: Distribution of elephants in Nigeria according to protected area status**



Rangers on patrol, Cross River National Park. Author: Ajibade Adedotun/WCS



Map 1: Location of ten Elephant Sites in Nigeria



### 3.1.1 Oban

The Oban Division of Cross River National Park was established by Decree 36 of 1991 by upgrading the existing Oban Group of Forest Reserves. The Oban Division covers a total area of about 3,000 km<sup>2</sup> which is the largest area of rainforest remaining in Nigeria and is contiguous with Korup National Park in Cameroon. Oban constitutes an important watershed and is a recognised biodiversity hotspot with high levels of endemism and species richness (Oates et al., 2004). In addition to forest elephants, Oban also contains an important population of the critically endangered Preuss's red colobus monkey *Procolobus preussi* as well as the Nigeria-Cameroon chimpanzee *Pan troglodytes ellioti*. Unfortunately, Oban has several unresolved management issues including the presence of the Mkpote enclave inside the park. Most critically the revised park boundary as proposed by WWF in 1989 has not yet been gazetted. Agricultural expansion and human settlement along the Calabar-Ekang road has effectively divided the Oban Division into two separate halves.

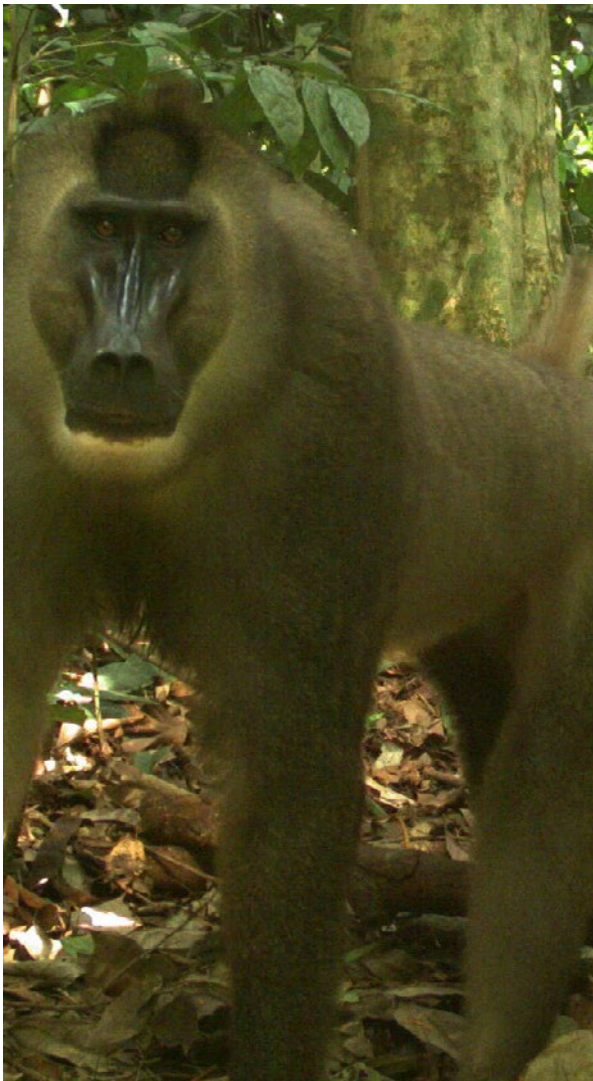
The rugged Oban Hills are located west of the road and the Ikpan block and Ndebiji Hills are located

to the east, both of which are contiguous with Cameroon. The areas surrounding Oban have also been subject to an expansion of commercial agriculture, mainly oil palm and rubber, there is also a large unresolved pineapple concession in the heart of Oban (Schoneveld, 2013).

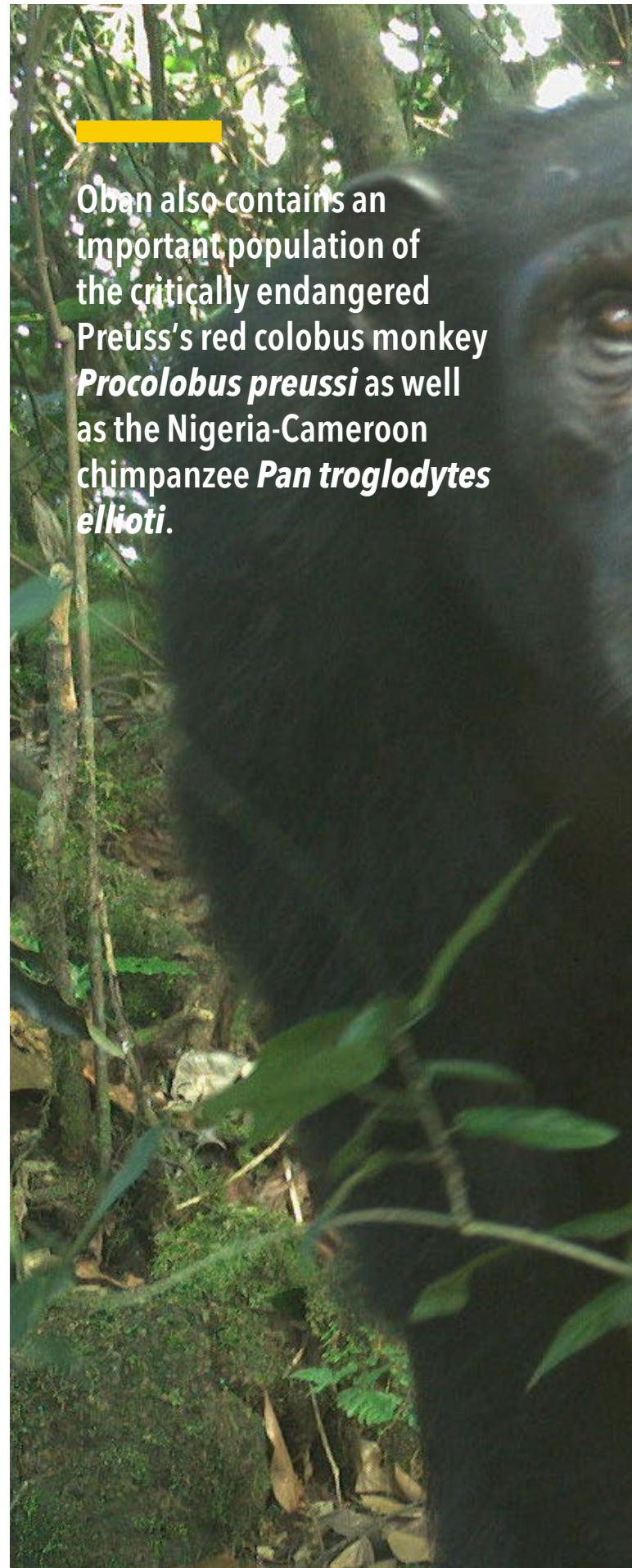
Cross River National Park is relatively well protected by the Nigeria National Park Service, with around 75 rangers based at 17 ranger posts located along the park boundary. The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) currently provides support for ranger patrols in Oban including ranger training, field equipment, patrol allowances and field rations. As a result, the Oban rangers are relatively well-trained and equipped and the level of patrol effort in Oban is relatively high with more than 4,000 patrol man days completed per year. Note that the visibility profile in a forest environment is rather different from that in a woodland or open savannah, meaning that effort or encounter rates in forest cannot be compared with those in woodland and/or open savannah without applying correction factors (Jachmann, 2012; 2008a&b; 1998).



There have been no surveys of the Oban elephant population since the 1990s (Tooze, 1994; Dickinson, 1995). Hunter interviews of Oban Hills in 1994 concluded that elephants were found in 8-12 distinct areas and that each could represent a separate herd (Tooze, 1994), a pilot elephant census of the Oban Hills in 1995 concluded that there were fewer than 100 elephants remaining in 8 to 12 isolated groups (Dickinson, 1995). The current size of the elephant population in Oban is estimated to be fewer than 50, the combined elephant population of Oban and Okwangwo is listed as 74 in the African Elephant Status Report (IUCN, 2016). The main threats to elephants in Oban are poaching for ivory and to a lesser extent human-elephant conflict (in total, an average of 1-2 cases of HEC are reported each year from the Edondon, Ekuri Eyenyen and Etara areas, see map). The elephants in Oban are restricted to 'Oban West' and are not known to cross the Calabar-Ekang road and are therefore not considered to be transboundary in nature and are not contiguous with the elephants in Korup NP in Cameroon. HEC has also been reported in the border areas of Mfaminyen and Ekang (presumably by elephants from Cameroon).



Camera trap photo of drill monkey, Cross River National Park.  
Author: WCS



Oban also contains an important population of the critically endangered Preuss's red colobus monkey *Procolobus preussi* as well as the Nigeria-Cameroon chimpanzee *Pan troglodytes ellioti*.

Camera trap photo of Nigeria-Cameroon chimpanzee, Cross River National Park.  
Author: WCS







### 3.1.2 Okwangwo

The Okwangwo Division of Cross River National Park is also located in Cross River State and was established by Decree 36 of 1991 by upgrading the existing Okwangwo, Boshi and Boshi Extension Forest Reserves. This important forest block is located at the headwaters of the Cross River and is contiguous with Takamanda NP in Cameroon and covers an area of approximately 640 km<sup>2</sup>. Elevation ranges from 150m in the south to around 1,700m on the edge of the Obudu Plateau in the north. Perhaps the main threat to Okwangwo is the presence of three large enclave villages inside the park whose ever expanding farmlands threaten to sever Okwangwo into two separate halves, as well as agricultural encroachment along the edges of the park. In addition to forest elephants, Okwangwo contains the largest population of the critically endangered Cross River gorilla *Gorilla gorilla diehli* in Nigeria as well as the endangered Preuss's guenon *Allochrocebus preussi* and the Nigeria-Cameroon chimpanzee *Pan troglodytes ellioti*.



Camera trap photo of forest elephants in Okwangwo, Cross River NP. Author: NPS

**This important forest block is located at the headwaters of the Cross River and is contiguous with Takamanda NP in Cameroon and covers an area of approximately 640 km<sup>2</sup>**

The last elephant surveys of Okwangwo were done in 1996 when it was estimated that a herd of up to sixteen elephants ranged between the Oyi River, Okwa II and Takamanda up to Mbuli (Obot et al., 1996). The current size of the elephant population in Okwangwo is estimated to be fewer than 50, the combined elephant population of Oban and Okwangwo is listed as 74 in the African Elephant Status Report (IUCN, 2016). In 2020, *ad hoc* camera trapping in Okwangwo, supported by WCS, confirmed the presence of a group of approximately 10 elephants with young.

The main threats to elephants in Okwangwo are poaching for ivory and human-elephant conflict (HEC has been reported from Bamba, Okwangwo, Bashu, and Abo Mkpang communities). The elephants in Okwangwo are known to move between Takamanda NP in Cameroon and the Okwangwo Division of Cross River National Park in Nigeria and are considered as a transboundary population. The Okwangwo Division of Cross River National Park is relatively well protected by the Nigeria National Park Service, with around 70 rangers based at 8 ranger posts located along the park boundary.



The Wildlife Conservation Society currently provide support for ranger patrols in Okwangwo including ranger training, field equipment, patrol allowances and field rations. As a result, these rangers are relatively well-trained and equipped, and the level of patrol effort in Okwangwo is relatively high with roughly 4,000 patrol man days completed per year.

### 3.1.3 Okomu

Okomu National Park, previously the Okomu Wildlife Sanctuary, is a forest block of roughly 200 km<sup>2</sup> set within the larger 1,082 km<sup>2</sup> Okomu Forest Reserve and is situated about 60 km north-west of the historical city of Benin in Edo State. The vegetation is typical Guinea–Congo lowland rainforest and is characterized by a mosaic of swamp-forest, high forest, secondary forest, and open scrub. Okomu Forest Reserve was previously the largest block of lowland rainforest in western Nigeria although today, much of this forest has been converted to oil-palm and rubber. Large-scale illegal logging (which has been going on since the 1950s) and the expansion of large rubber and oil-palm plantations nearby are the biggest threats to Okomu National Park. About 50,000 people in 45 villages live in and around the park, and the population is increasing. Many are recent immigrants attracted by possibilities of employment in the timber and oil-palm industries, or by farming and hunting opportunities. In addition to forest elephants, Okomu also contains a small population of Nigerian-Cameroonian chimpanzees, *Pan troglodytes ellioti* as well as the Nigerian white-throated monkey *Cercopithecus erythrogaster pococki*.

The National Park Service (NPS) estimates that the elephant population in Okomu is 40-50 although it is listed as only 12 in the African Elephant Status Report (IUCN, 2016) and elephant surveys of Okomu in 2015-2016 estimated the elephant population of Okomu at 33 (Amusa *et al.*, 2017). Elephant surveys of Okomu in 2007 noted the presence of elephants mostly in the southern half of the park although their range also includes the surrounding forest reserve (Ikemeh, 2009). Due to habitat loss caused by agricultural expansion and logging, the movement of elephants between Okomu and Gele-Gele Forest Reserve no longer occurs (NARESCON, 1991). The main threats to the elephants of Okomu are poaching and HEC.

Although park authorities believe that the hunting of elephants has greatly reduced and claim that no elephants have been killed since Okomu was upgraded to a national park in 2000, the illegal hunting of other wild animals is reported to be rampant (Amusa *et al.*, 2017). Human-

elephant conflict is also reported to be severe with communities on the edge of the park and is growing as a result of increased logging and agricultural expansion. Okomu National Park (ONP) has around 55 rangers, but the level of patrol effort is unknown. In 2022, a 30-year co-management agreement for ONP was signed between the National Park Service and the African Nature Investors Foundation (ANI) in collaboration with Okomu Oil Palm Company and Edo State Government. The proposed new landscape-based project will include the adjacent Okomu Forest Reserve and Gele-Gele Forest Reserve.

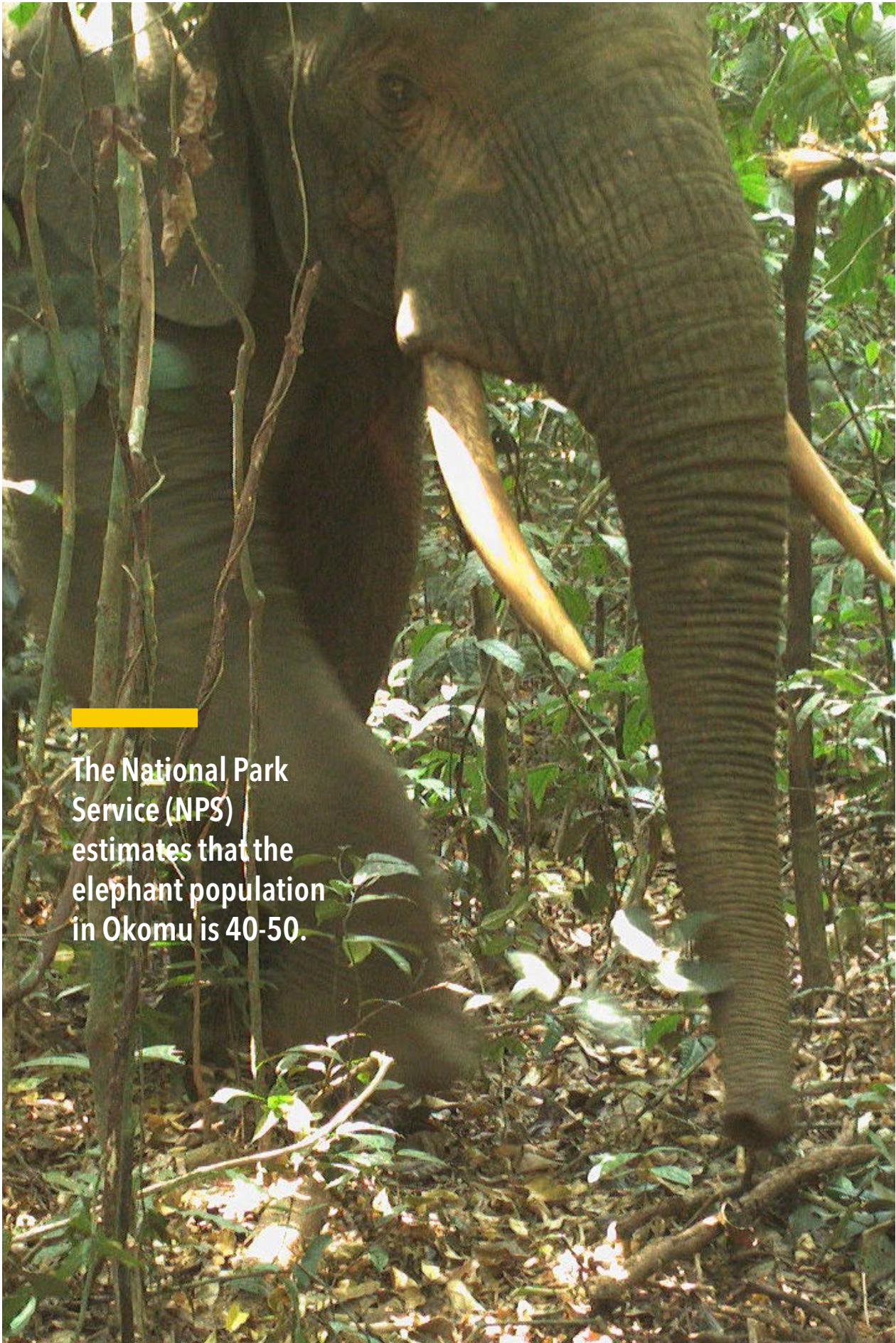
### 3.1.4 Omo

Located in Ogun State, Omo Forest Reserve was gazetted in 1925 and is only 150 km from the city of Lagos. Omo covers an area of about 1,305 km<sup>2</sup> including a 4.6 km<sup>2</sup> Strict Nature Reserve at its core and derives its name from the Omo River that traverses the reserve. In 1977, Omo Forest Reserve was designated as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve but this did little to stop the logging and farming within its boundaries. Today, it is estimated that more than half of the forest reserve has been converted to farmland and *Gmelina* plantation.

In a bid to protect what little forest is left, a proposal to convert 550 km<sup>2</sup> of the forest reserve into a wildlife sanctuary (no logging, hunting, or farming) was submitted to Ogun State Government but this has not yet been formally approved. It is understood that designation of the wildlife sanctuary is opposed by powerful logging interests in the state, and it is uncertain if there is sufficient political will within the state government to upgrade Omo to a wildlife sanctuary. Omo is contiguous with four other highly degraded forest reserves (Oluwa, Shasha, Ife and Ago-Owu), the largest of which is Oluwa Forest Reserve to the east. Surveys in 2008 by Rachel Ikemeh found no evidence for continued elephant presence in Oluwa Forest Reserve (Ikemeh, 2009). The vegetation in Omo is mixed moist semi-evergreen rainforest. Due to selective exploitation in the past, the forest is largely mature secondary, with pockets of primary forest along river courses and in other areas where log extraction is difficult.

In addition to forest elephants, Omo also contains populations of the Nigerian-Cameroonian chimpanzee *Pan troglodytes ellioti* and the Nigerian white-throated monkey *Cercopithecus erythrogaster pococki*. The forest reserve is inhabited by people of several ethnic groups with several human settlements (with an estimated total population of more than 7,000) within and around the reserve. The most serious threat to Omo is the presence of numerous illegal farms inside the boundary and the clearing of forest to cultivate cocoa and plantains.





The National Park Service (NPS) estimates that the elephant population in Okomu is 40-50.

Camera trap photo of forest elephant, Cross River National Park. Author: WCS



Recently the growing of marijuana deep inside the reserve by criminal gangs has become an issue. Logging is also a major threat to Omo and although most of the logging is selective, the new Shagamu–Benin expressway threatens the reserve by facilitating the transport of logs from the reserve. Afforestation with exotic species compromised the ecological integrity of the reserve when about 20% of the area was cleared and replanted with *Gmelina arborea*.

Omo receives limited support from Ogun State Government and is protected by only 12 rangers – two forest rangers employed by Ogun State Government and ten locally-employed scouts funded through NCF/Wild Planet Trust. These rangers protect a relatively small area around the Strict Nature Reserve (SNR) and Erin Camp but have been powerless to address logging and illegal farming within the wider forest reserve. The Forestry Research Institute of Nigeria (FRIN) is responsible for the SNR itself although they lack the manpower for regular patrols. Limited training was provided for the Omo rangers by WCS in 2019 but this training has not been repeated since then. The unarmed rangers patrol the forest daily, either on foot or by motorcycle and sometimes roadblocks may be used. Some estimates of the Omo elephant population are as high as 60-80, although it is listed as 30 in the African Elephant Status Report (IUCN, 2016) and was estimated to be 75 in the Elephant Conservation Plan for Nigeria (NARESCON, 1991). Elephant surveys of Omo in 2015-2016 estimated the elephant population at 28 (Amusa *et al.*, 2017) although this was evidently a substantial underestimate as 30-35 elephants subsequently left for Itasin in 2018 while other groups remained in Omo. Nevertheless, it is possible that the current estimate of 50-70 elephants for Omo is an overestimate.

Hunting of elephants is reportedly uncommon in Omo, attributed to the lack of automatic weapons (Ikemeh, 2008), but likely also due to the long-standing conservation education programme by NCF/Wild Planet Trust. As a result of the illegal settlements and farming expansion, human elephant conflict is a major problem at Omo and there have been several retaliatory elephant killings as a result. In 2012-2013 three elephants were killed and there was a human fatality at Baoku in 2018, although there have been no recent incidents. There is an active conservation education programme at Omo, funded by Paignton Zoo/Wild Planet Trust through the Nigerian Conservation Foundation. There has been some limited support for local livelihoods from the Forestry Research Institute of Nigeria (often linked to UNESCO biosphere funds) and Ogun State Government.

**The forest reserve is inhabited by people of several ethnic groups with several human settlements (with an estimated total population of more than 7,000) within and around the reserve.**

### 3.1.5 Itasin

Itasin is a tropical swamp forest in Ogun State that covers an area of approximately 50km<sup>2</sup>. It is surrounded by coastal mangrove waters including the convergence of the Osun and Omo rivers into the Lagos lagoon. The local communities living adjacent to Itasin are mainly fishermen, with three small fishing communities of less than 600 people. In 2018, a group of around 30-35 forest elephants left Omo Forest Reserve, due to pressure from human encroachment, and settled in Itasin after crossing the Sagamu Benin Expressway (see map 2).

Itasin also contains the critically endangered Nigerian white-throated monkey. The land within Itasin was acquired by the Ogun State Government in 1974 although the community retain some communal rights. Itasin has no formal protected area status but has been proposed as a wildlife sanctuary to the Ogun State Government since 2021. Three rangers were posted to Itasin from the State Forestry Department, but they do not have any accommodation, training, or equipment, and it is unlikely that any meaningful patrols occur. The main threat to the site is logging, and the granting of logging concessions by the Ogun State Government, as well as agricultural encroachment. Although hunting is said to be low, crop raiding of farms by elephants is reported to be a major problem and retaliatory killing of elephants in recent years is a major concern, for instance a young bull was killed in April 2021. A local Nigerian organization known as the Erin Wildlife Conservation Trust (EWCT), has plans to establish a base camp from which community sensitization and conservation education will be promoted, as well as research and the piloting of different HEC mitigation strategies. The NGO West African Biodiversity Conservation Trust (WABCT) also has plans to provide support for Itasin.



### 3.1.6 Andoni

Located in Andoni Local Government Area of Rivers State the proposed Andoni Wildlife Sanctuary covers an area of 124 km<sup>2</sup>. The habitat is rainforest and freshwater swamps that are seasonally flooded, as well as mangroves. Andoni has been proposed as a wildlife sanctuary to protect the island's elephants, but currently has no formal protected area status. In 1992, the elephant population of Andoni was reported to be as high as 46 but numbers have since dwindled to an estimated 10 individuals today due to hunting by poachers from neighbouring Akwa-Ibom State.

The elephants appear to be restricted to Andoni Island which is surrounded by tidal creeks. The small elephant population at Andoni is threatened by poaching although it is claimed that there is currently no poaching of elephants due to improved conservation awareness amongst local communities.

Numerous cases of human elephant conflict have been reported over the years. In 1973 a canoe carver

was killed by an elephant at Ilotombi and in 1993 an oil worker was killed by an elephant (Thouless, 1993). In 2004, after several protests from Opobo/Nkoro, a permit to kill one 'rogue' elephant at Queenstown was granted.

In 2003 an elephant was killed at Ekede, and although no-one was arrested, the tusk was returned to the Forestry Department of Rivers State. It has been suggested that elephants move north to higher ground and more heavily settled areas of the island during the wet season and therefore levels of crop damage and HEC increase during the wet season (Thouless, 1993). In the past Andoni received conservation support from the MacArthur Foundation and UNDP to train forest guards and to establish a Community Forest Management Committee. With funds from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) a set of by-laws and code of ethics were developed for the protection and conservation of elephants. Unfortunately, this project has now closed, and Andoni does not have any rangers or conservation funding.



Oyi River, Cross River National Park. Author: Gertrude Nna-njar/WCS



### 3.1.7 Idanre

The conservation area known as ‘Idanre’ (see map 2) is a cluster of eight contiguous forest reserves in Ondo and Edo States:

- Idanre Forest Reserve (FR); Akure-Ofosu FR;
- Owo FR;
- Ala FR (also known officially as Akure-Ofosu);
- Onishere FR and Ohosu FR (Edo State).

Unfortunately, these protected areas exist on paper only and have been extensively degraded and converted to agriculture including the growing of marijuana. Elephants have only been reported from Idanre FR and rarely in Akure Ofosu FR, both of which are in Ondo State (Ikemeh, 2008). Although the cumulative size of the Idanre forest cluster is 2,159 km<sup>2</sup>, Idanre FR only covers an area of 561 km<sup>2</sup>. The elephant population of Idanre is poorly known but has certainly suffered a progressive and dramatic decline over time due to hunting for their ivory and habitat loss and the current best estimate is between 10 – 20 individuals.

The main threat to the elephants of Idanre is clearing of the forest reserve for agriculture, primarily to grow cocoa (Idanre is Nigeria’s largest cocoa producing area).

In a bid to increase local revenue generation, Ondo State Government has leased out areas of the forest reserve to local farmers and appears to be unsympathetic to conservation concerns. With the remaining elephants restricted to ever decreasing small forest patches, and surrounded by expanding agriculture, levels of HEC are rising. In addition to forest elephants, Idanre FR also contains a small population of the Nigerian-Cameroonian chimpanzee *Pan troglodytes ellioti* and the Nigerian white-throated monkey *Cercopithecus erythrogaster pococki*. Unfortunately, due to a lack of commitment from the state government there are no rangers posted to Idanre FR and consequently there are no patrols to protect the forest. The only NGO working in Idanre is the SW Niger Delta Forest Project (SWNDFP) which is focused on monitoring the remnant chimpanzee and elephant populations at the site.



Rangers on patrol in Yankari Game Reserve. Author: Natalie Ingle/WCS

**The main threat to the elephants of Idanre is clearing of the forest reserve for agriculture, primarily to grow cocoa (Idanre is Nigeria’s largest cocoa producing area)**

### 3.1.8 Yankari

Yankari was gazetted as a game reserve in 1956, the first in Nigeria, and became a national park in 1991. As a result of this long period of protection, Yankari has become the nation's foremost wildlife area and a major tourist attraction in Nigeria. In 2006, responsibility for the management of Yankari was handed back to Bauchi State Government and it is currently managed as a game reserve. The state government has neglected Yankari in recent years and the situation has not changed much since 1991 when it was observed that "... budgetary allocations for the management of the reserve dwindled. The reserve had also suffered from the appointment and constant change of management personnel most of whom are clearly not qualified in wildlife management and conservation" (NARESCON, 1991).

Yankari Game Reserve covers an area of 2,244 km<sup>2</sup> of Guinea savanna woodland and is bisected by the Gaji River. Two major habitat-types occur: dry savanna woodlands and riparian vegetation, which includes areas of fadama. Yankari contains the largest elephant population in the country and supports an important population of lions as well as roan, hartebeest, buffalo, leopard, and hippopotamus. A co-management agreement for Yankari was signed between Bauchi State Government and the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) in 2014 and renewed in 2018 for an additional ten years. Yankari has around 60 rangers and has received considerable support from WCS since 2009. Levels of patrol effort are relatively high, with more than 7,000 patrol man days per year.

The main conservation threats to Yankari include poaching (around 50 poachers are arrested each year) and illegal livestock grazing. Although levels of poaching have declined in recent years, the threat due to illegal livestock grazing is growing – due to

the loss of grazing reserves and stock routes across the country. At the same time annual dry-season bush fires set by poachers to flush mammals are also believed to be changing the structure and composition of the park's vegetation. There has been some concern over the spread of neem tree *Azadirachta indica* in the reserve, the seeds of which are dispersed by baboons and other primates which feed on their fruits.

The main threat to elephants in Yankari is human elephant conflict (HEC), specifically crop raiding, and to a lesser extent elephant poaching for the ivory trade, although elephant poaching has been drastically reduced since 2015.

HEC is growing and during their annual wet-season movements out of the park, elephants cause damage to crops belonging to the surrounding communities. With the recent expansion of dry season farming around the reserve, human elephant conflict is no longer restricted to the wet season only and an average of six cases of HEC are reported monthly. WCS is supporting with mitigation measures including the use of 18 elephant guardians around the reserve who act as an early warning system whenever elephants leave the confines of the reserve, as well as beehive fences and watchtowers. Yankari is the only MIKE (Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants) site in the country. After a period of intense elephant poaching between 2006 and 2015, the elephant population in Yankari declined from 350 in 2006 (Omondi *et al.*, 2006) to 100-150 in 2011 (Bergl *et al.*, 2011). Since 2014 (when WCS signed a co-management agreement with Bauchi State Government) only four cases of elephant poaching have been recorded. The current size of the Yankari elephant population is estimated to be roughly 100.



Savanna elephants at a watering hole, Yankari Game Reserve. Author: WCS





Yankari woman cooking with an improved fuelwood stove. Author: Nuradeen Ahmed/WCS

### 3.1.9 Borno\*

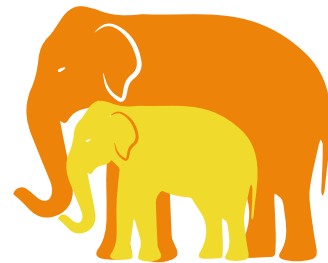
Borno State formerly supported two elephant herds: one of 200-300 around the Lake Chad shoreline and the other around Sambisa Game Reserve (at least during the dry season) of 350-500. The entire elephant range in Borno State was said to be extensively farmed during the wet season and extensively grazed during the dry season (the shores of Lake Chad are reputed to be one of the most important dry season grazing refuges for livestock in Nigeria). Unfortunately, an aerial survey of Sambisa in 2006 found that the reserve had been overrun by livestock and could find no evidence of elephants (Omondi *et al*, 2006). Given the insecurity around Lake Chad it was assumed that the Lake Chad elephants had suffered a similar fate to those in Sambisa. However, in December 2019, a herd of approximately 250 elephants was sighted by a UN helicopter close to Rann, in Kala-Balge Local Government Area, south of Lake Chad. This was the first confirmed elephant sighting in Borno State since the Islamist insurgency started in 2009. This area is outside of the national park (see map 6) and has no official protection.

The elephant herd around Lake Chad is believed to move between Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Borno State in Nigeria. In Nigeria, the elephant range throughout Borno State includes but is not limited to Chad Basin National Park. Chad Basin National Park is composed of several areas or 'sectors' which are geographically remote from one another. The Chingurmi-Duguma Sector covers an area of 1,228 km<sup>2</sup> and is situated in Bama and Kala-Balge Local Government Areas of Borno State, close to Waza National Park in Cameroon.

The vegetation is typical Sudan–Guinea Savanna, except in the most northerly part of the park where

it takes on a more Sahelian aspect, partly due to the influence of human activities. A large part of the park is flooded by waters from the Dorma River during the rainy season, creating flood-plain wetlands which attracts waterbirds and other wildlife. Although legally protected as part of a National Park, illegal grazing, fuelwood-collection, and hunting take place and bush fires are frequent.

Provided that security can be improved, the park offers hope for the re-establishment of the nationally extinct *Giraffa camelopardalis* population, since giraffe (and other mammals) occasionally cross into the park from the Waza National Park in Cameroon. The threats to the elephants in Borno include human-elephant conflict, habitat loss/fragmentation, hunting and illegal trade, and the ongoing insurgency in the region. It is believed that the level of elephant poaching has reduced in the area due to inaccessibility for poachers as a result of the insurgency, although it is known that at least three elephants were killed in Kala-Balge Local Government Area in May 2020 (possibly as a result of HEC). In December 2023, two elephants were shot by soldiers in the Kala-Balge area in retaliation for crop raiding.



**The threats to the elephants in Borno include human-elephant conflict, habitat loss/fragmentation, hunting and illegal trade, and the ongoing insurgency in the region.**



### 3.1.10 Nigeria-Benin border

Small groups of elephants are known to regularly cross into Nigeria from the Republic of Benin, some of which have stayed. In August 2018, three elephants strayed from Benin and crossed into Koko Besse Local Government Area of Kebbi State (see map 9). The Governor of Kebbi State immediately ordered their protection and local communities were informed that it is an offence to hunt or kill an elephant. The Governor has since hailed farmers living along the fringes of the River Niger in Koko Besse and Bagudo Local Government Areas for protecting the elephants even though the elephants have damaged some crops while foraging. The elephants have since been seen

in various areas across the state, including Danko/Wasagu and Bagudo Local Government Areas. The current size of the group is now believed to be two elephants. In June 2021, two elephants were sighted at Shafachi in Borgu Local Government Area in Niger State, which is about 50 km away from Kainji<sup>7</sup> Lake National Park. In February 2022, one elephant (it was reported that the group was originally three elephants) was reported from Gobo community between Oyo and Kwara States, some 60 kms from Old Oyo National Park, but tragically died during an attempt to move it to the University of Ibadan Zoo.



Savanna elephants in Yankari Game Reserve. Author: A Dunn/WCS

<sup>7</sup> In the 1970s, Kainji Lake National Park was reported to contain 650 elephants but by the late 1970s all the elephants were reported to have migrated to the neighbouring Benin Republic due to poaching pressure and disturbance from the air-force base at New Bussa.

## 3.2 Threat Analysis

Nigeria's elephant population is under threat, particularly the small, isolated populations of forest elephants. Recent research suggests that forest elephants reproduce much more slowly than savanna elephants and are even more vulnerable to poaching than previously thought. The main threats to the elephant population in Nigeria were well described in the Elephant Conservation Plan for Nigeria published in 1991 by the Natural Resources Conservation Council (NARESCON, 1991) and are as follows:



### 3.2.1 Poaching and Illegal Ivory Trade

The international ivory trade has played a key role in the decline of Nigeria's elephants and the continued domestic trade in ivory continues to pose an ongoing threat to the country's remaining elephants. After a period of heavy elephant poaching from 2006 to 2014, a co-management agreement between the Wildlife Conservation Society and Bauchi State Government has managed to drastically reduce elephant poaching in Yankari Game Reserve (only four elephants known to have been killed by poachers since 2014). The transformation took almost ten years to achieve and involved intensive ranger training and provision of field equipment, vehicles, field rations, camping allowances and arrest bonuses. To monitor illegal activities, a monitoring, data collection and management system known as SMART (Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool) has been used in Cross River National Park and Yankari Game Reserve since 2016. In 2019, six<sup>8</sup> elephants in Yankari were fitted with satellite collars so that the location of the herds is always known, allowing them to be closely followed by ranger teams to provide maximum levels of protection and a rapid response to mitigate HEC whenever elephants leave the reserve.

Elephant poaching still occurs at some sites in the country including Cross River National Park (involving hunters from northern Nigeria and Cameroon), Omo Forest Reserve and others. Since 1991, elephant poaching has resulted in the total loss/displacement of at least four savanna elephant populations (Kainji Lake National Park, Sambisa Game Reserve, Kamuku National Park, Kwiambana Game Reserve) and at least two forest elephant populations (Ifon Forest Reserve and Taylor's Creek Forest Reserve).

Nigeria is known to be the primary exit point for ivory trafficked from Africa to Asia (UNODC, 2022). Despite the ivory trade ban under CITES, Nigeria-linked ivory seizures amounted to 5,629 kg from 2009-2011, 11,769 kg from 2012-2014, and 12,211 kg in the period 2015-2017. Ivory is predominantly sourced from countries across West and Central Africa, and although some is sold into local markets, most of the ivory is exported, predominantly to Viet Nam and China. The ivory trade in Nigeria is facilitated through weak law enforcement and corruption of officials at ports and in government agencies (UNODC, 2022).

Nigeria developed a National Ivory Action Plan in 2015, and in 2018, Nigeria joined the Elephant Protection Initiative (EPI). Unfortunately, the domestic trade in ivory remains, while despite various seizures, there have been no successful prosecutions of any individuals involved in the ivory trade to date.

8 Collars no longer functional and require replacement





### 3.2.2 Habitat Loss and Fragmentation

A major cause of the decline of elephants in West Africa has been the dramatic loss of habitat and the degradation of remaining habitats, especially during the 20th Century (IUCN, 2005). Across Nigeria, elephant habitat is becoming increasingly degraded and fragmented due to agricultural expansion, bush burning, logging and road development. In Cross River National Park, a planned superhighway was scheduled to cut across the middle of the park, but it was eventually cancelled after strong opposition from NGOs and local communities.

Rates of forest loss across southern Nigeria are among the highest anywhere in the world (FAO, 2015), the current deforestation rate is estimated at 3.5% per annum.

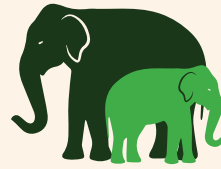


Ebony logging, Cross River State. Author: WCS



### 3.2.3 Livestock Grazing

Nigeria's first elephant conservation plan (NARESCON, 1991) identified grazing of livestock inside protected areas as a major threat to elephant conservation. In recent years the situation has worsened due to the loss of grazing reserves and traditional stock routes due to agricultural expansion. It is known that livestock grazing degrades elephant habitat, elephants are displaced by livestock and forced onto surrounding farmlands increasing levels of human-elephant conflict. Illegal livestock grazing has been identified as a serious threat to elephants in Yankari Game Reserve.



### 3.2.4 Human Elephant Conflict

Despite the low numbers of elephants remaining, human elephant conflict (HEC) is a growing problem in Nigeria and is now the main threat at several sites, particularly Itasin, Andoni, and Yankari Game Reserve. Human-elephant conflict leads to negative and even hostile attitudes among local communities, posing a threat to conservation. Elephants can have severe impacts on local livelihoods through crop-raiding and consumption of scarce water resources, although compensation<sup>9</sup> for damaged crops is not routinely provided by government authorities. Such competition for resources can result in conflict and loss of human life as well as retaliatory killing of elephants. In 2018-19, three people were killed around Yankari by elephants although the deaths occurred not as a result of conflict but were caused by excited villagers trying to get close to the elephants to take photographs. In a bid to reduce levels of human-elephant conflict around Yankari, WCS has established a network of 18 elephant guardians around the reserve whose role is to act as an early-warning system and to provide an alert whenever elephants stray onto local farms. WCS is also piloting the use of bee-hive fences, 'smelly-fences' and watchtowers around Yankari to help deter elephants from local farms and reduce levels of human-elephant conflict.



Nomadic Fulani pastoralists on the edge of Yankari GR. Author: WCS

<sup>9</sup> Experience has shown in several countries that government compensation systems are expensive and inefficient (staff costs, limited means of control, corruption) and do not directly address the root of the problem (Hoare 2012).



### 3.2.5 Legal and Institutional Challenges

In 2021, a report commissioned by the Environmental Investigation Agency in partnership with Africa Nature Investors Foundation reviewed the wildlife-related laws of Nigeria and concluded that the federal laws governing international wildlife trafficking in Nigeria are relatively weak as compared to jurisdictions in East and Southern Africa and need to be strengthened. The report also highlighted serious failings in the prosecution of wildlife offenders in the country and the dangers associated with the power to ‘compound’ rather than prosecute an offence, i.e., on admission of the accused and payment of a fine, these agencies discontinue any further action.

The power to compound is a potential incentive for corrupt practices. Overall, there is a lack of awareness of federal and state wildlife laws and coordination between different government agencies is unheard of in the context of wildlife crime (Jayanathan, 2021). There is also a marked disparity between state wildlife law and federal wildlife law. The weakness of wildlife law enforcement institutions is a major challenge for the conservation of elephants in Nigeria, particularly at the state level. Poor levels of implementation capacity are due to the lack of training and poor staff motivation, but also to budget limitations, resulting in insufficient operating budgets, lack of personnel and equipment, and management plans which are rarely if ever updated.



Farmers in a watchtower protecting their crops at night from elephants. Author: Ahmed Nuradeen/WCS





Setting up a 'smelly fence' around Yankari to reduce levels of HEC. Author: Ahmed Nuradeen/WCS



# 4.0 Spatial Planning

Spatial planning, which includes infrastructural planning, should be considered as the overarching tool for long-term conservation



## 4.1 Introduction

Spatial planning, which includes infrastructural planning, should be considered as the overarching tool for long-term conservation, to (a) minimize the human-elephant interface, thereby preventing and/or reducing HEC; (b) maintain connectivity under conditions of accelerating climate change (building ecosystem and species resilience); (c) provide important and valuable ecosystem services; (d) minimize fragmentation of landscapes; (e) conserve large intact wilderness areas to achieve the 30 x 30 target<sup>10</sup> by 2030; (f) strengthen biodiversity conservation, and (g) contribute to climate change reduction.

Spatial and infrastructural planning can be applied at four broad levels: regional (international), national, sub-national and local.

These correspond to the levels of government at which decisions about land use are usually taken. Different kinds of decisions are taken at each level, where the methods of planning and types of plans also differ. However, at each level there is need for a land-use strategy, policies that indicate planning priorities, projects that tackle these priorities and operational planning to get the work done. This entire process is facilitated by improved interaction between the different levels of planning. Moreover, at each successive level of planning, the direct participation of local communities needs to increase. In land-use planning, public education is just as important as land-use zoning and regulation. Thus, spatial planning, especially at the regional and national levels (macro level), is typically a long-term expensive process that requires strong support from the respective levels of government, and often involves legislative changes that may take years to materialize.

Spatial and infrastructure planning needs to be an integral part of National Development Strategies (NDSs) and evidently National Development Plans (NDPs), thereby linking the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAP) and climate change to the NDSs/NDPs, the latter through the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). Using spatial and infrastructure planning, large areas of contiguous habitat need to be maintained or created, where under conditions of accelerating climate change, elephants and other wildlife species that require vast areas can survive in the long term, thereby safeguarding biodiversity and contributing

to climate change reduction while minimizing the human-elephant interface. This can best be achieved through an integrated approach that builds on the synergies of actions on development, biodiversity, climate change and resilience. Implementing the three major global development frameworks (SDG, NBSAP and NDC), through systematic programmatic integration and mainstreaming in development plans and policies. The need to approach multiple development challenges in a holistic manner stems from the fact that in the past the silos approach has proven to be ineffective.

Although most of the actual planning is done at the sub-national levels, the NDP or NSP needs to be conducive to land-use planning at these lower administrative levels, while accounting for diurnal and seasonal movements of elephants and other wildlife. In other words, state, and local government area<sup>11</sup> (LGA) level plans should be harmonized with national plans to avoid discrepancies and/or conflicts in priorities. Once the human-elephant interface has been minimized at the macro level, interactions between humans and elephants will need to be minimized further through participatory local level land-use planning.



Community meeting, Cross River National Park. Author: WCS

<sup>10</sup> New global biodiversity framework established by the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to ensure that at least 30 per cent of global land and sea areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and its contributions to people, are conserved by 2030.

<sup>11</sup> An LGA is the third tier of government in Nigeria below the federal and state government.

## 4.2 Participatory Land-Use Planning and Fragmentation

Local-level land-use planning needs to be tackled by a participatory approach, involving all local stakeholders in the process that should be based on understanding and acceptance. Prior to this process, active and old elephant and wildlife corridors and preferred seasonal feeding and watering areas need to be identified. Once the continuous habitat in question is sufficiently large for elephants and other wildlife to survive in the long term, even under conditions of accelerating climate change and, the interface between humans and wildlife has been minimized, the process requires identifying areas suitable for farming staple and cash crops, including settlements. These areas must be clearly demarcated for elephants as no-go zones. Overlaps of defined areas set aside for people and for wildlife and therefore competition for resources should be circumvented. Only in cases where this is difficult to avoid, HWC/HEC mitigation tools need to be used.

The challenge of coexistence, whereby a landscape is used and managed in such a way that people find safe space and ways to make a living, but elephants and other wildlife also find safe space to thrive falls or stands with this pragmatic approach to spatial planning, at both the macro and local levels. The above, however, describes the simplified theoretical basis for spatial planning, while in the real world, for many range States where elephants occur outside protected areas, landscape heterogeneity has been gradually modified by anthropogenic factors such as logging, farming, settlements, and livestock. This in turn has led to increased fragmentation of entire landscapes, which is the breaking up of continuous natural habitat into smaller patches, whereby a patch is an area having relatively homogeneous conditions relative to other patches.

Fragmentation is a major threat to global biodiversity and species distribution, first due to isolation of

protected areas, and second, in the case of elephants, increased patchiness not only results in a decline of the dispersal area, but it disrupts movements via corridors and migration routes, thereby severing connectivity and lowering resilience, especially under changing weather conditions. Increased patchiness will also lead to an increase of edges with farmlands and settlements (human-elephant interface). Because we are dealing with perimeters of irregularly shaped patches, an increase in fragmentation or patchiness results in an exponential increase in the human-elephant interface, and consequently an exponential increase in human-elephant conflicts. Further fragmentation due to an increase in the number of small, scattered farms will result in an exponential increase in HEC, with declining elephant presence up to the point where they will completely disappear from the landscape (fragmentation threshold). Many scattered small farms act as 'stepping-stone corridors' for elephants providing alternative food sources during their nightly forage trips (Pittiglio, 2012).

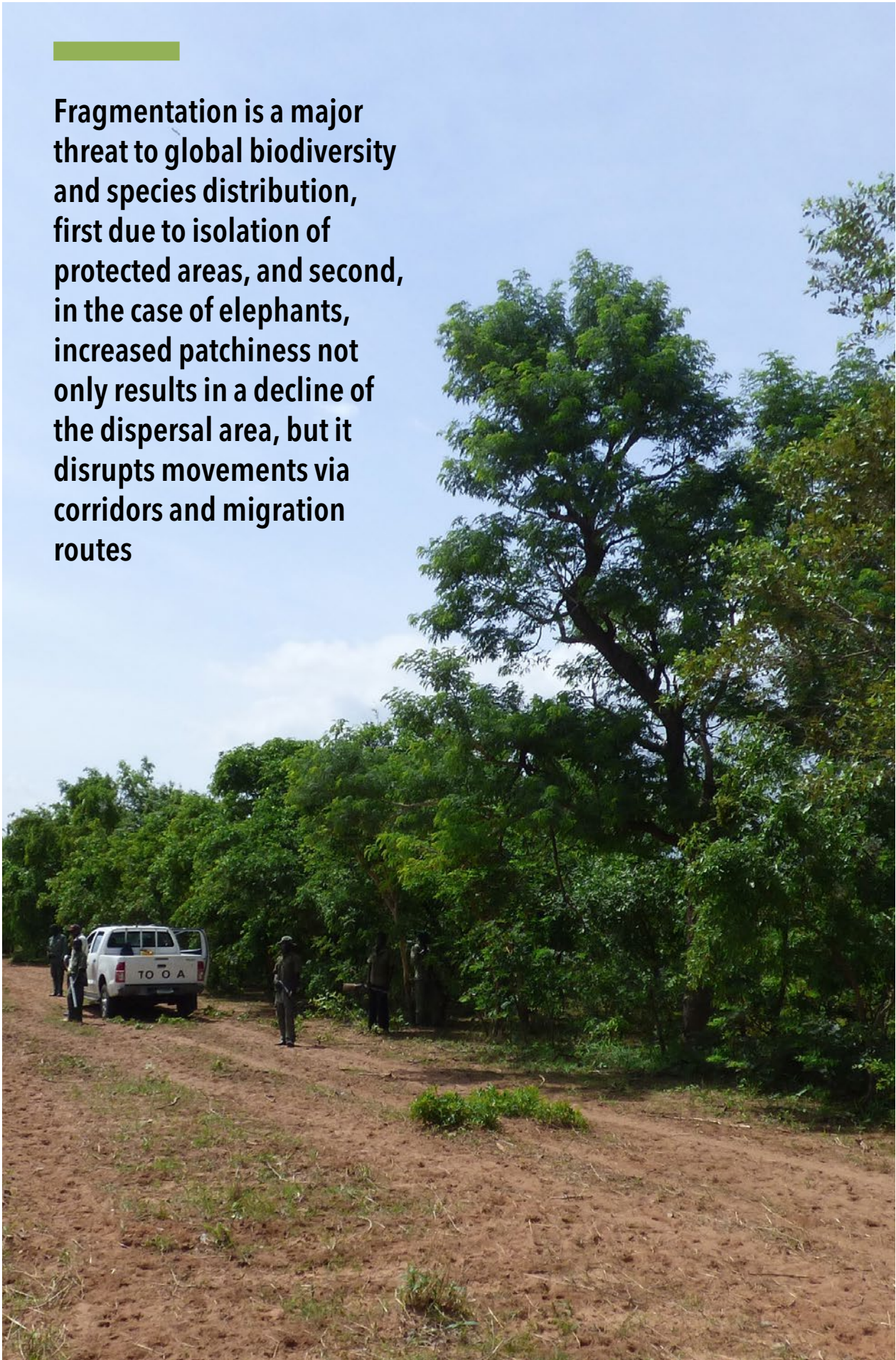
This implies that in terms of spatial planning to mitigate HEC and to maintain and improve connectivity, the size of the human-elephant interface needs to be minimized, whereby a few large farm blocks with settlements is preferred to many small farms scattered over the landscape.

In the case of Nigeria, a densely populated country with few wild places left for elephants and other wildlife to thrive, macro level spatial planning is not an option (with the possible exception of some of the northern states). However, to safeguard the few remaining populations of elephants and other wildlife, while at the same time working towards the 30 x 30 target and contributing to climate change reduction, participatory land-use planning at the local-level may increase the actual size of the available elephant habitat, thereby improving connectivity and resilience of vulnerable wildlife species, while minimizing the human-elephant interface to also reduce HEC.





**Fragmentation is a major threat to global biodiversity and species distribution, first due to isolation of protected areas, and second, in the case of elephants, increased patchiness not only results in a decline of the dispersal area, but it disrupts movements via corridors and migration routes**



Farmlands extend right to the edge of Yankari Game Reserve. Author: WCS

## 4.3 Transboundary Conservation

There are three<sup>12</sup> transboundary elephant populations in Nigeria: Lake Chad (Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad and Niger), Okwangwo-Takamanda (Nigeria-Cameroon), Nigeria-Benin border.

### 4.3.1 Lake Chad

Lake Chad is an important ecological zone, home to one of the largest bird populations on the continent and a major site for migratory waterbirds from Europe and Asia (map 6). Surrounded by arid deserts, for thousands of years the wetland has represented one of the most important economic and cultural hubs between sub-Saharan Africa and North Africa. The shores of Lake Chad are extensively farmed during the wet season and extensively grazed by livestock during the dry season (the shores of Lake Chad are reputed to be one of the most important dry season grazing refuges in Nigeria). Lake Chad has been proposed as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. A herd of around 200-300 elephants were previously found along the shorelines of Lake Chad but have not been seen for many years. In December 2019, a herd of approximately 250 elephants was sighted by a UN helicopter close to Rann, in Kala-Balge Local Government Area, south of Lake Chad. The elephant herd around Lake Chad is believed to move between Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Borno State in Nigeria.

### 4.3.2 Okwangwo-Takamanda

A small group of less than 50 forest elephants move back and forth between the contiguous Okwangwo Division of Cross River National Park and Takamanda National Park in Cameroon (map 5). These elephants are threatened by poaching for ivory and also as a result of the continued insecurity in SW Cameroon.

### 4.3.3 Nigeria-Benin border

The W-Arly-Pendjari (WAP) complex in Benin, Niger and Burkina Faso contains the largest herd of elephants in West Africa and is only 70 km from the international border with Nigeria (see map 9).

Small groups of 2-3 elephants regularly cross over into Nigeria from the Benin Republic but have not yet recolonised Kainji Lake National Park and/or Old Oyo National Park. Kainji Lake National Park formerly contained around 650 elephants but has not supported elephants since the 1980s. A participatory land-use planning exercise should aim to protect connectivity between Park W in Benin and Kainji Lake National Park as far as possible. With improved protection of sites such as Kainji Lake National Park, and with worsening security in neighbouring countries, elephants may start to move back to parts of their former range.

## 4.4. Land-use Planning for Eight Elephant Landscapes in Nigeria

The eight elephant landscapes in Nigeria where connectivity, size of available habitat, and HEC may be improved by local-level land-use planning are:

**1. Itasin-Omo-Idanre.** Omo Forest Reserve is part of a cluster with four other highly degraded forest reserves (Oluwa, Shasha, Ife, and Ago-Owu Forest Reserves) and contiguous with Itasin (open area) in Ogun State. The management authority of both Omo and Itasin is Ogun State Government with support from local NGOs (NCF, EWCT and WABCT). Idanre Forest Reserve in Ondo State is part of a cluster of eight contiguous forest reserves with shared boundaries: Idanre; Akure-Ofosu; Owo; Ala (also known officially as Akure-Ofosu); Onishere and Oshu Forest Reserves.

**2. Okomu-Gele Gele.** Located in Edo State, Okomu National Park is managed by the National Park Service (NPS). In collaboration with the NPS and the Edo State Government, a new project currently being developed by Africa Nature Investors (ANI) aims to connect Okomu National Park, Okomu Forest Reserve and Gele-Gele Forest Reserve as a single landscape.

**3. The Oban Division of Cross River National Park.** Located in Cross River State. Managed by NPS with support from WCS, although it is uncertain if the Oban elephants also form part of the transboundary population with Korup National Park in Cameroon.

**4. The Okwangwo Division of Cross River National Park.** Located in Cross River State. Managed by NPS with support from WCS, and part of a transboundary population with Takamanda National Park in Cameroon.

**5. Lake Chad/Borno State/Chad Basin National Park.** A transboundary population of approximately 250 elephants around Lake Chad moving between Waza National Park in Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Borno State in Nigeria. Their range also overlaps with parts of Chad Basin National Park, managed by NPS.

**6. Andoni.** The small elephant herd centred around the proposed Andoni Wildlife Sanctuary in Andoni Local Government Area of Rivers State.

**7. Yankari-Pai River Landscape.** The elephants of Yankari Game Reserve in Bauchi State are now mainly restricted to the game reserve but there are areas of suitable habitat along the Pai River (including Pai River Forest Reserve and Kambari Game Reserve) to the south of Yankari in Plateau State and Taraba State.

<sup>12</sup> During the 1990s a small group of elephants regularly moved from Faro NP into the northern Gumti sector of Gashaka Gumti NP each dry season, but always returned to Cameroon. These movements stopped many years ago.



**8. Nigeria-Benin Transboundary Landscape.** In 2018, a small group of three elephants strayed across the border into Kebbi State from the Republic of Benin. Their presence has been largely tolerated by local farmers, and a group of two elephants was still present in Kebbi in 2022. Since then, there have also been reports of stray elephants from Benin in Niger State close to Kainji Lake National Park, and in the area between Oyo State and Kwara State close to Old Oyo National Park.

#### 4.4.1 Itasin-Omo-Idanre

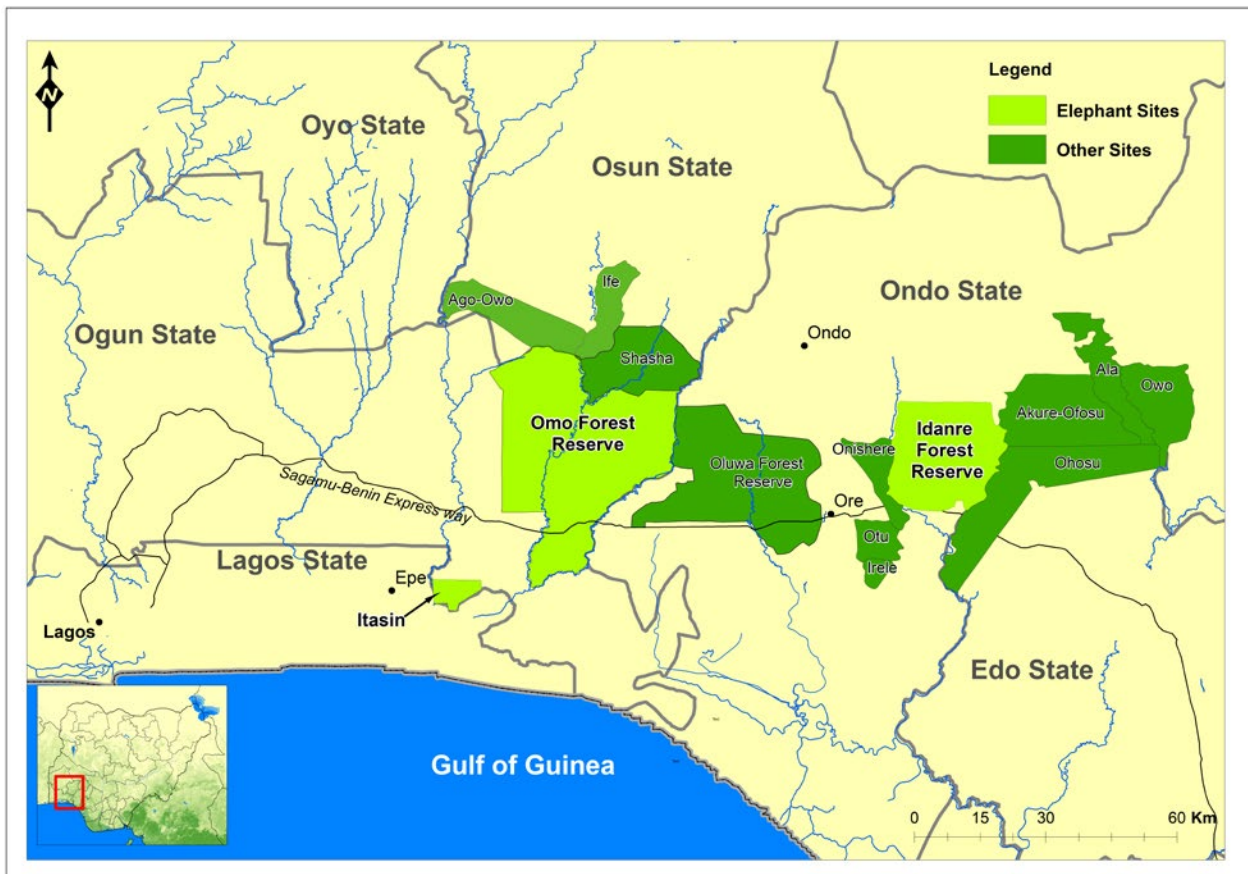
Omo is contiguous with four other highly degraded forest reserves (Oluwa, Shasha, Ife, and Ago-Owu Forest Reserves), the largest of which is Oluwa Forest Reserve to the east (see map 2). Surveys in 2008 by Rachel Ikemeh found no evidence for continued elephant presence in Oluwa FR (Ikemeh, 2009). There are a number of human settlements (with a total population of about 7,000) within and around Omo Forest Reserve, inhabited by people of several ethnic groups.

As a result of the illegal settlements, human elephant conflict is a major problem and there have been several retaliatory elephant killings as a result. Omo currently receives support from the Nigerian Conservation Foundation (NCF) through the Wild Planet Trust/Paignton Zoo and others. A plan to upgrade the status of Omo to that of a wildlife sanctuary has been drawn up and submitted to the Ogun State Government.

In 2018, a group of around 30 forest elephants left Omo Forest Reserve, presumably due to pressure from human encroachment (possibly because of limestone quarrying in the area) and crossed the Sagamu-Benin Expressway into Itasin (see map 2). Itasin currently has no formal protected area status but has been proposed as a wildlife sanctuary by Ogun State Government. Frequent crop raiding of surrounding farms is reported to be a major problem and the retaliatory killing of elephants is of major concern if no action is taken. Support for Itasin has been proposed by the Erin Wildlife Conservation Trust (EWCT) and the West African Biodiversity Conservation Trust (WABCT).



Map 2: Itasin-Omo-Idanre Landscape



Idanre is a cluster of eight contiguous forest reserves with shared boundaries: Idanre; Akure- Ofosu; Owo; Ala (also known officially as Akure-Ofosu); Onishere Irele; Otu and Ohosu Forest Reserves (see map 2).

The cumulative size of the Idanre forest cluster is 2,159 km<sup>2</sup>, but elephants have only been reported from Idanre and Akure Ofosu (Ikemeh, 2008). The elephant population of Idanre is poorly known but has certainly suffered a dramatic decline over time due to hunting for their ivory and habitat loss. The current best estimate is between 10 – 20 individuals. The main threats to the elephants of Idanre are hunting for their ivory, habitat loss due to farm encroachment (which includes marijuana farming), and retaliatory killings due to human-elephant conflict. A participatory land-use planning exercise should incorporate Oluwa, Shasha, Ife, Ago-Owo and Omo Forest Reserves as well as Itasin, Idanre, Akure-Ofosu, aiming for the largest continuous conservation area, repairing connectivity as far as practically

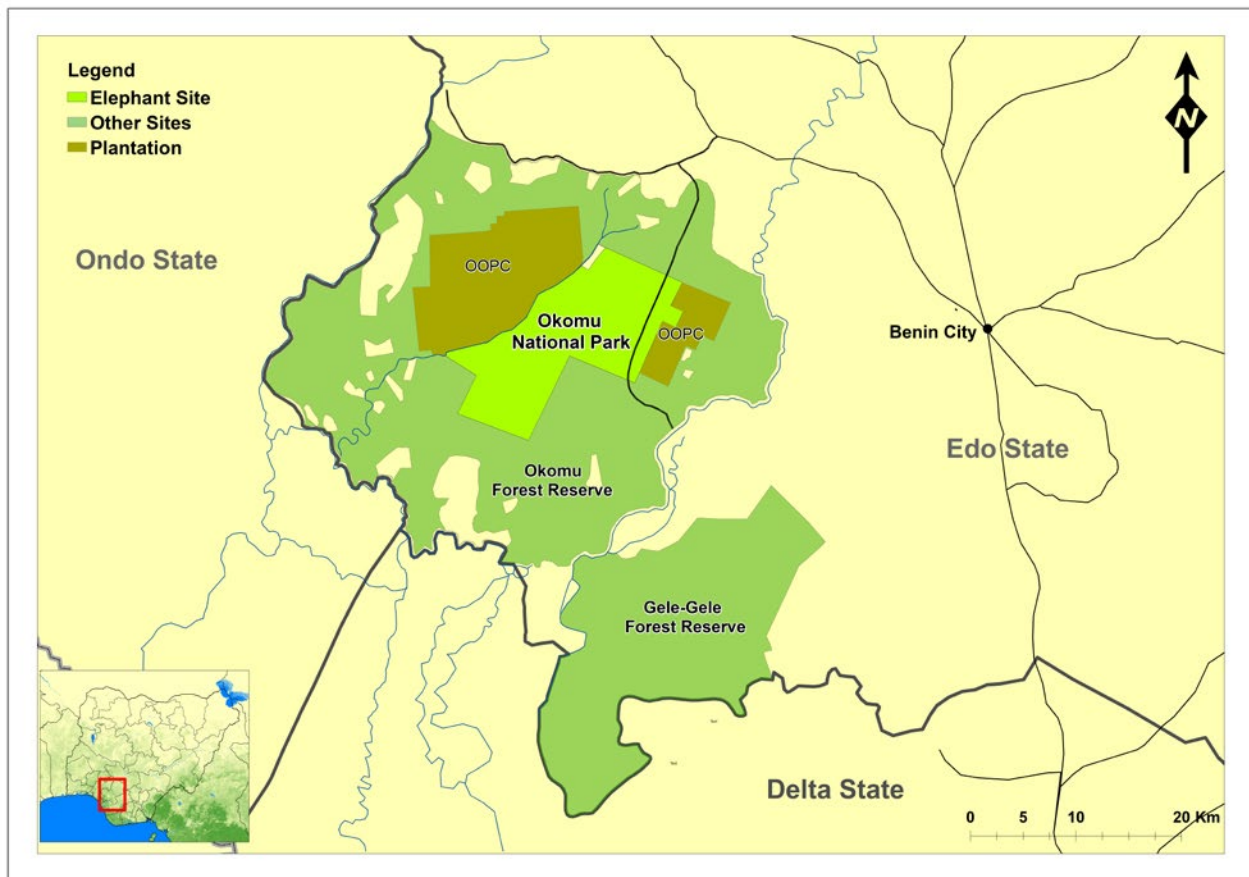
feasible, while limiting the human-elephant interface to reduce HEC. In places where elephant use overlaps human land use, HEC mitigation measures should be adopted. In this way further fragmentation can be halted, and a representative block of forest preserved for progeny, contributing to biodiversity conservation, the 30 x 30 target, as well as climate change reduction.

#### 4.4.2 Okomu-Gele Gele

Located in Edo State, Okomu National Park is managed by the National Park Service (NPS) and receives support from Africa Nature Investors (ANI). The park comprises roughly 200 km<sup>2</sup> of forest and swamps, under heavy pressure from illegal logging, settlement, hunting and even oil smuggling. To the east and the west, the park is flanked by commercial plantations of oil palm managed by the Okomu Oil Palm Company (OOPC).



Map 3: Okomu-Gele Gele Landscape



Although the park is small and faces several threats, it still contains a small population of elephants, forest buffalos and chimpanzees. The mostly depleted Okomu Forest Reserve surrounds the park on all sides and is contiguous with the Gele-Gele Forest Reserve, located to the south-east of Okomu Forest Reserve (see Map 3). A landscape approach and participatory land-use planning exercise is recommended to ensure connectivity for elephants and other wildlife through a wide corridor running south through Okomu Forest Reserve and connecting Okomu National Park with Gele-Gele Forest Reserve.

#### 4.4.3 Cross River National Park: Oban

The Oban Division of Cross River National Park contains a small elephant population of less than 50 individuals. However, the elephants are restricted to Oban West and are not contiguous with Korup National Park in Cameroon (see map 4). Agricultural expansion and human settlement along the Calabar-

Ekang road has divided the Oban Division into two separate halves with Oban East and Oban West now effectively isolated from each other. Although elephants are only found in Oban West, and do not cross the Calabar-Ekang road into Oban East, it is considered likely that elephants may occasionally cross into Oban East from Cameroon. The areas surrounding Oban have also been subject to an expansion of commercial agriculture of oil-palm and rubber (Schoneveld, 2013), with a large illegal pineapple concession in the heart of Oban East, managed by Dansa Foods Limited (Dangote Group). In addition to Oban West and Oban East there is also suitable wildlife habitat in adjacent forests including Cross River South Forest Reserve and the Ndebiji Hills. Participatory land-use planning should limit further encroachment and fragmentation, repair connectivity using rehabilitation of ancient migration corridors, thereby significantly contributing to biodiversity conservation.

Supporting transboundary conservation between Nigeria and Cameroon and maintaining connectivity between the Oban Division, Korup NP, and the Ejagham Council Forest Reserve is vitally important for the long-term future of the Oban Division of Cross River National Park.

#### 4.4.4 Cross River National Park: Okwangwo

The Okwangwo Division of Cross River National Park contains a small elephant population that is part of the transboundary population with Takamanda National Park in Cameroon (see map 5). Elephants in Okwangwo are mainly restricted to the lowland areas of the national park but do occasionally raid farms on the edge of the Mbe Mountains. The Okwangwo Division is effectively separated into two halves by the presence of three large enclave villages inside the park and suffers from agricultural

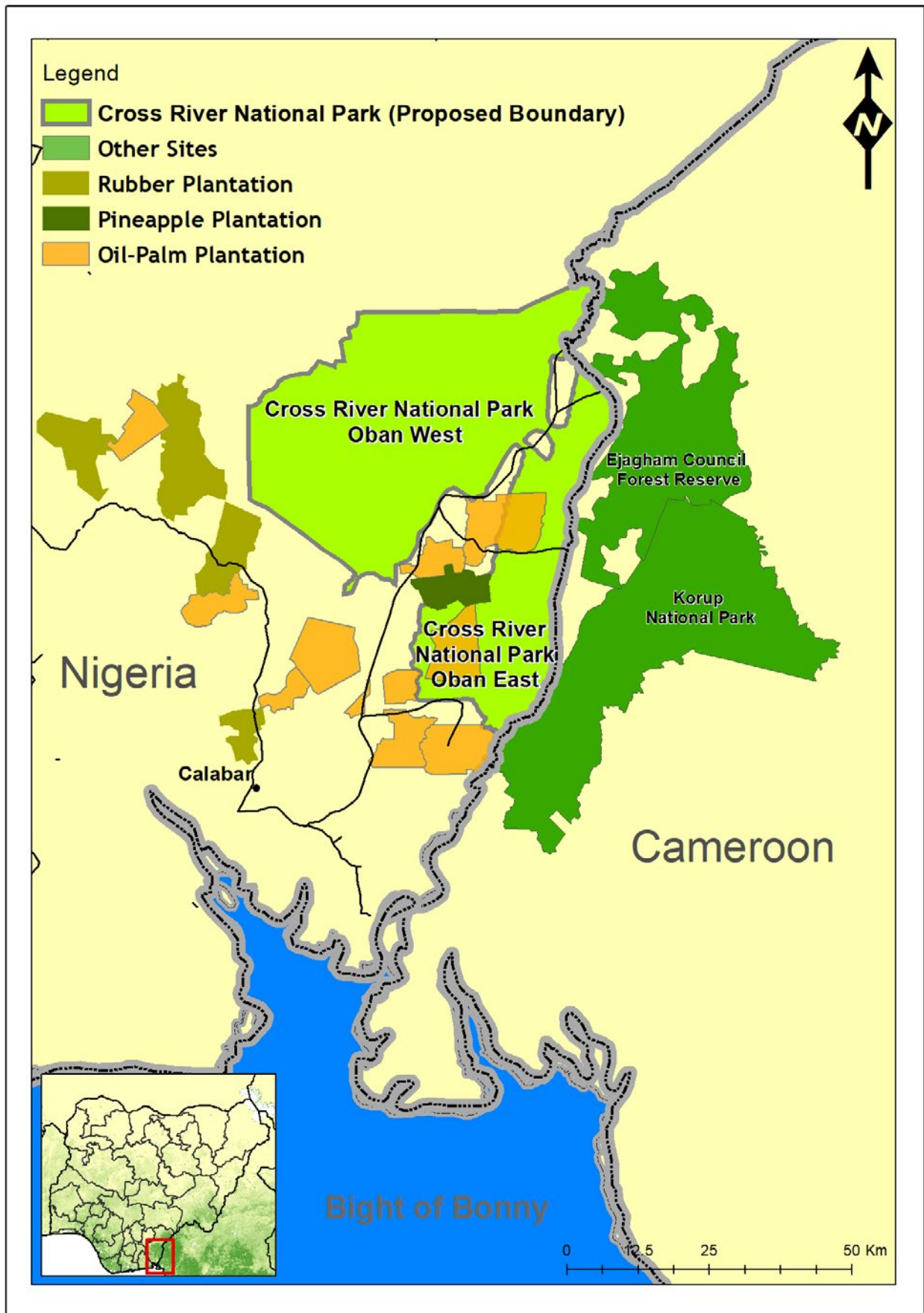
encroachment along its edges. Participatory land-use planning may help to limit further encroachment and fragmentation, increase the size of the area effectively available to elephants and other vulnerable wildlife, repair connectivity, and significantly contribute to biodiversity conservation. There is also suitable wildlife habitat to the west of the park, including the Mbe Mountains, Afi River Forest Reserve and Afi Mountain Wildlife Sanctuary if connectivity between the sites can be maintained. The main goal should be to use land-use planning to create a large enough block of undisturbed forest for elephants and other endangered species to survive in the long term, thereby also contributing to the 30 x 30 target and climate change reduction. For this process to be successful, authorities from Cameroon need to be involved, not merely for the spatial planning aspect, but also to start joint patrols in border areas under a bilateral agreement.



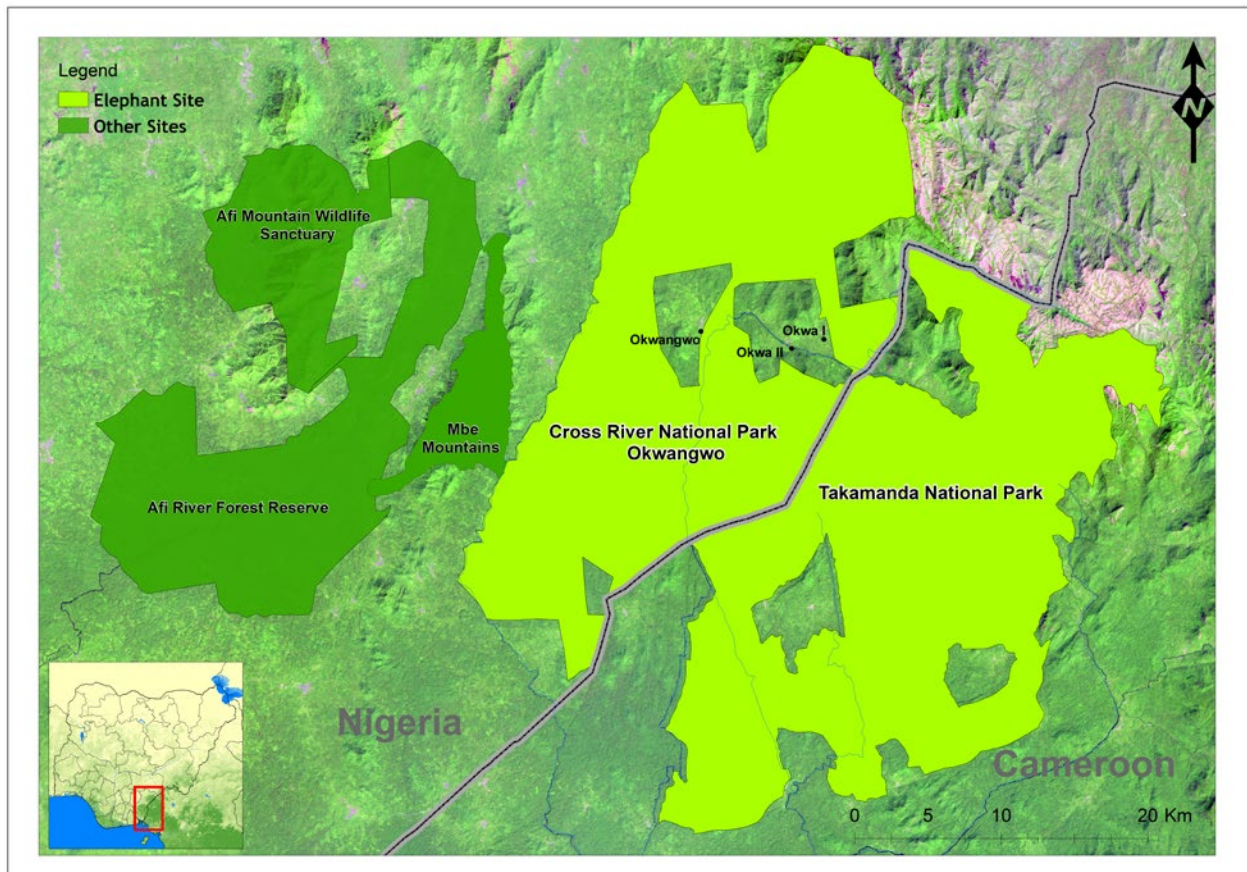
Savanna elephants, Yankari Game Reserve. Author: WCS



Map 4: Oban-Korup Landscape



## Map 5: Okwangwo-Takamanda Landscape



Lake Chad. Author: AP Leventis

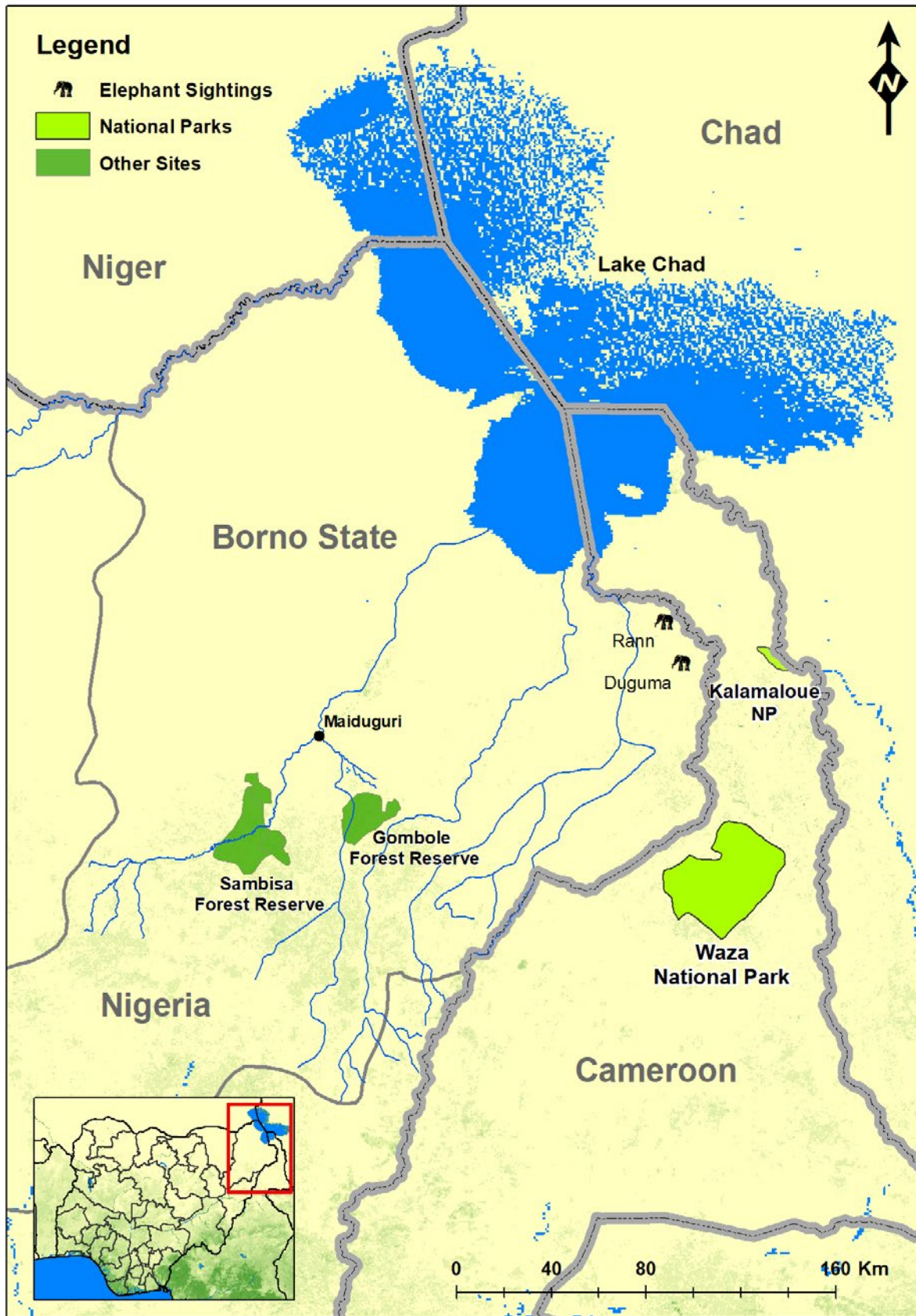
### 4.4.5 Lake Chad/Borno State/Chad Basin National Park

The Lake Chad area has witnessed a major Islamist insurgency since 2009, leading to unprecedented levels of insecurity and human displacement. The transboundary elephant herd around Lake Chad originally moved between Waza and Kalamaloue National Parks in Cameroon (see map 6), but with increased poaching and worsening security in northern Cameroon, the elephants have also been moving into Chad, Niger, and Borno State in Nigeria as well. In Nigeria, the elephant presence has been only temporary, and movements are restricted to the border areas of Borno State, which includes the Chingurmi-Duguma Sector of Chad Basin National Park.

Chad Basin National Park is composed of several areas or 'sectors' which are geographically remote from one another. Land-use planning could help create an area large enough to accommodate this highly stressed and continuously pursued herd of elephants when they enter Nigeria. This also implies improved security for local communities bordering Lake Chad. Moreover, cooperation with the authorities in Cameroon is required to improve security in both Waza and Kalamaloue National Parks and surrounding communities, which together with a protected corridor in eastern Borno State will provide a large enough area with relatively improved security to hopefully provide a future for this last herd of Lake Chad elephants.



Map 6: Lake Chad-Borno State-Chad Basin NP Landscape





#### 4.4.6 Andoni Island

A small group of elephants appears to be restricted to Andoni Island which is surrounded by tidal creeks (see Map 7), although their range may not be confined to the proposed wildlife sanctuary (124 km<sup>2</sup>) itself. Numerous cases of human elephant conflict have been reported in recent times, particularly during the wet season. A questionnaire survey among the local communities should shed some light on year-round land use by this remnant population of elephants. This information should then be used for a participatory land-use planning process to

determine the boundaries of the proposed Andoni Wildlife Sanctuary, with the aim to maximize the area available to elephants and other endangered species, and to minimize the length of the human-elephant interface, thereby reducing HEC. This will not only help in safeguarding this unique population of elephants, but it will increase the area under strict protection, facilitating the 30 x 30 target, while contributing to climate change reduction, as well as biodiversity conservation.

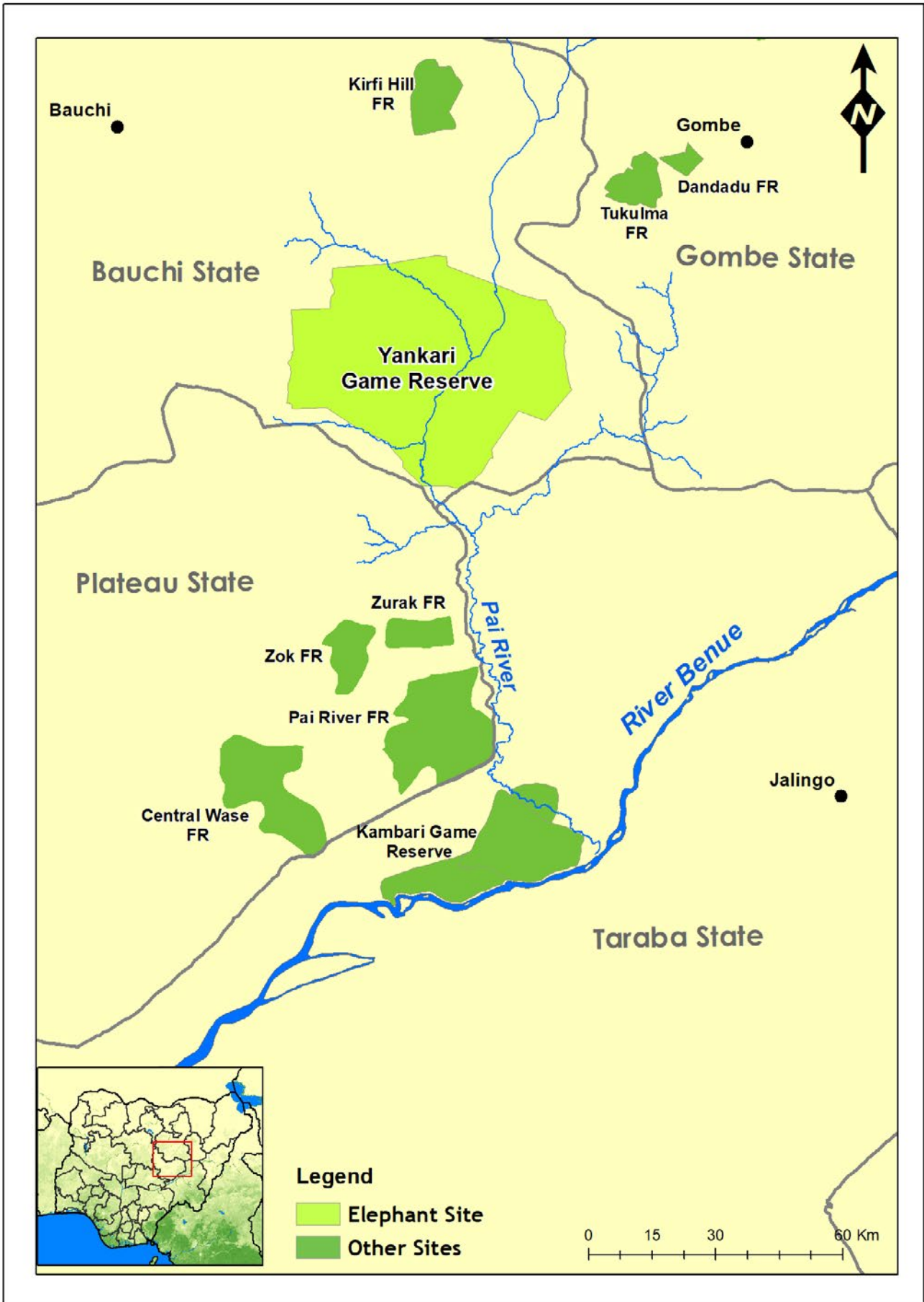




Map 7: Andoni Island



Map 8: Yankari - Pai River Landscape





#### 4.4.7 Yankari - Pai River

Yankari is surrounded by intensive agriculture and there are growing levels of crop raiding by elephants during their annual wet-season movements out of the reserve. Human elephant conflict is now the main threat to elephants in Yankari, and the threat is expected to grow with the recent expansion of dry season farming around the reserve, with human elephant conflict no longer restricted to the wet season. To the south of Yankari, along the Pai River, there are several forest reserves as well as a game reserve that could provide suitable habitat for elephants (see Map 8). With Yankari containing the last truly viable savanna elephant population (and one of only two lion populations left in Nigeria), the habitat available to these highly endangered species should be extended towards the south, including the above-mentioned forest reserves and game reserve, as well as wide corridors in-between.

A participatory land-use planning exercise is required to determine corridor options and to incorporate forest reserves in Plateau State as well as Kambari Game Reserve in Taraba State, repairing connectivity as far is practically feasible, while limiting the human-elephant interface to keep HEC at manageable levels. In the long term, the corridor comprising the forest reserves in Plateau State needs to be upgraded to one or several wildlife sanctuaries to strengthen their conservation status and to safeguard connectivity (see Map 8). The goal is to increase the size of the habitat available, thereby lowering elephant densities locally, but in combination with HEC mitigation measures provide safe space for people to thrive while safeguarding the future of one of Nigeria's most important elephant populations and the last of its lions.

#### 4.4.8 Nigeria-Benin Transboundary Landscape

The W-Arly-Pendjari (WAP) complex in Benin, Niger and Burkina Faso contains the largest herd of elephants in West Africa and is only 70 km from the international border with Nigeria (see Map 9). In 2018, a small group of three elephants strayed across the border from the Republic of Benin into Kebbi State (see Map 9), following the banks of the Niger River. Since then, a small group of two elephants have also been sighted in Niger State some 50 km from Kainji Lake National Park. The elephants have caused some crop damage, but their presence has been largely tolerated by local farming communities.

Kainji Lake National Park formerly contained around 650 elephants but has not supported elephants since the 1980s. A participatory land-use planning exercise should aim to protect connectivity between Park W in Benin and Kainji Lake National Park as far is practically feasible. With security in neighbouring countries deteriorating, elephants may start to move back to part of their old range, which includes Kainji Lake National Park. Increasing numbers of elephants may stimulate the authorities to rehabilitate the park and upgrade law enforcement to turn this area into another destination for local tourists. However, elephants will only move back into the park when there is safe passage (corridors), which is especially true for family groups.



Savanna elephants, Yankari Game Reserve. Author: WCS





## 4.5 Brief Summary of Participatory Land-use Planning

1. Determine seasonal area use by elephants (and other vulnerable and endangered species) through a rapid systematic dung survey, and/or by interviewing people from all relevant communities (possibly using questionnaires). During the survey, create awareness among local people of the plight of elephants, the importance of ecosystem services, biodiversity conservation, climate change and climate variability, as well as the upcoming participatory land-use planning process.
2. When a human land-use map is available, incorporate the areas used by elephants (and other species). If not, using information available, develop a rough map of both human and elephant area use, as well as intact wildlife habitat.
3. Indicate areas of overlap, hard human-elephant interface, as well as blocked corridors. These are the key areas that require discussion during the participatory process.
4. Make an inventory of both legal and illegal extractive and non-extractive industrial activities in the area.
5. Review legislation, policy, local and customary laws, and institutions plus the knowledge of local land users of these elements.
6. Identify key institutions, organizations and groups, and the relations among them.
7. Develop different scenarios for a continuous wildlife habitat with the least overlap with human land use, while introducing buffer zones on hard edges – that is with a sharp boundary between intensive elephant use and agricultural practices.
8. Develop a series of locally relevant HEC mitigation measures that may be proposed for areas with sharp boundaries, always centred around and eventually managed by the communities involved.
9. Develop a series of initiatives to actively involve local communities in wildlife management and sharing of revenues when tourism is involved. Propose the establishment of a local multi-stakeholder advisory board to manage the wildlife resource, with ample representation from the key communities.
10. Use a solution tree, ranking of solutions, SWOT analysis and simulation of different scenarios as background to a series of open-air participatory workshops with all relevant communities and representatives of other key stakeholders present.
11. The outcome of this process should ideally be:
  - a) A large continuous area for wildlife conservation, officially gazetted as a reserve or sanctuary, free of extractive industries, but with access by members of the local communities for sustainable use of a limited range of natural resources.
  - b) Communities with their agricultural practices and/or livestock either free from HEC or with acceptable levels of HEC, supported by government and their partners in their management of conflicts, the wildlife resource, and their habitats.
  - c) Peaceful coexistence between humans and elephants.

# 5.0

## **Vision, Goal, Objectives, Targets and Recommended Activities**

This document provides a framework for the long-term conservation of forest and savanna elephants in Nigeria, identifying key goals to be achieved within ten years. The plan focuses on elephants, it also aims to promote wider conservation goals in areas of the country where elephants still occur.



A close-up photograph of two elephants in a savanna setting. The elephant on the right is in the foreground, facing left, with its trunk extended. The elephant on the left is partially visible, facing right. The background shows a hazy landscape with dry vegetation and a cloudy sky. A blue horizontal bar is positioned above the text.

Elephants play a pivotal role in preserving Africa's great natural spaces, and as ecosystem architects they are important players when it comes to climate change mitigation.



This document provides a framework for the long-term conservation of forest and savanna elephants in Nigeria, identifying key goals to be achieved within ten years. Although the plan focuses on elephants, it also aims to promote wider conservation goals in areas of the country where elephants still occur. Elephants play a pivotal role in preserving Africa's great natural spaces, first, as ecosystem architects they maintain landscape heterogeneity, thereby creating the conditions for

many other species to survive, and second, both in savanna and forest biomes they play an important role in increasing the storage of carbon and nitrogen in the soils. Thus, elephants not only support biodiversity as a keystone species, but they are important players when it comes to climate change mitigation. Therefore, without the architects of Africa's wild spaces, natural ecosystems would collapse, and the current climate crisis would accelerate.



## Vision

elephants thrive in well-managed healthy ecosystems and coexist alongside human populations, contributing to sustainable development and a source of pride as a flagship species for Nigeria.



## Goal

secure elephant populations and stop their decline across Nigeria recognising their potential to provide ecological, social, cultural and economic benefits.



## Target

by 2034 all elephant populations are effectively protected; the domestic ivory trade has been banned; and HEC has been reduced to acceptable levels as compared to the 2024 baseline, with zero retaliatory killing of elephants and zero human fatalities.



## Objectives

These eight objectives have been adapted from objectives outlined in the African Elephant Action Plan that was developed for CITES in 2010. The activities in the NEAP were developed through a participatory process that involved a two-day stakeholder workshop in Abuja in June 2021 and were further refined by an editorial committee (for more information on the composition of the committee please refer to 1.2 NEAP Development Process) established to guide production of the NEAP and the implementation plan.





## Objective 1a: Reduce illegal killing of elephants

### Target 1a: By 2027 elephant numbers killed illegally will be reduced to acceptable levels (PIKE < 0.5)

Nigeria has lost more than 99%<sup>13</sup> of its original elephant population, mainly due to poaching for their ivory. Poaching and the illegal ivory trade continue to pose a very serious threat to Nigeria's remaining elephant populations, which are small and vulnerable. Nigeria's elephants also face serious threats from habitat loss and fragmentation and growing human-elephant conflict. The neglected elephant population in the Ifon Game Reserve has recently gone extinct (NEAP workshop, 2021) and unless we rapidly reduce the illegal killing of elephants in Nigeria, we will lose more of the small vulnerable populations. The continued domestic ivory trade in Nigeria is both a threat to the recovery of Nigeria's remaining elephants and to the elephants of the region and should be closed immediately. Nigeria's new National Strategy to Combat Wildlife and Forest Crime in Nigeria (2022-2026) is based on closer collaboration between government agencies and the strengthening of international collaboration. The objectives of the strategy include enhance institutional capabilities; strengthen the legal framework; increase collaboration; honour international commitments; remove crime enablers; raise awareness of wildlife crime and provide alternative livelihoods; many of the recommended actions are also repeated here (also see Chapter 1.2).

**Table 3 : Activities Required to Achieve Objective 1a**

Objective 1a	Reduce illegal killing of elephants	
Targets	Activities	Indicators
1a.1 All 10 elephant sites managed according to an approved management plan <sup>14</sup> by 2026 (Y3)	1a.1.1 Develop a management plan for each elephant site according to international standards	Number of management plans developed
	1a.1.2 Ensure that each management plan is officially approved, and sufficient funds allocated by government	Number of management plans officially approved. Ratio budget (US\$) allocated per plan to budget required
	1a.1.3 Develop a financing strategy to implement the management plans for each elephant site, using one or more funding options described in Chapter 6	Number of financing strategies available
	1a.1.4 Ensure that implementation of each management plan is regularly monitored	Number of monitoring meetings/year/site. Availability of PIKE data/site
1a.2 All 10 elephant sites are effectively protected by well-trained, well-motivated and well-equipped rangers by 2026 (Y3)	1a.2.1 Provide basic training for rangers at each site in ranger field skills, and refresher training at least every 2 years.	METT/IMETT baseline established and monitored each year. Number of rangers trained, individual ranger scores in training report.
	1a.2.2 Review salary scale & working conditions for rangers to ensure compatibility between state & federal rangers.	Difference in salary between state & federal rangers
	1a.2.3 Review staffing levels and capacity building requirements at each site and recruit additional rangers where necessary	Staffing and capacity building needs assessment completed for each site. Number of additional rangers recruited/site by 2026
	1a.2.4 Provide necessary logistical support for ranger patrols (field rations, camping allowances, firearms etc) at all sites.	Patrol frequency, no. of kms patrolled, no. of patrol man days completed, no. of arrests made. SMART data, annual reports from each site
	1a.2.5 Provide necessary field equipment for rangers (boots, uniforms, tents/hammocks etc) required for anti-poaching patrols	Basic field equipment available for patrols at each site.

13 Prior to the colonial period, Nigeria may once have supported as many as 900,000 elephants if an average density of 1 elephant per km sq is assumed. Today, Nigeria has fewer than 400 elephants remaining.

14 To save Nigeria's last elephants it is essential that urgent conservation actions start as soon as possible and are not delayed pending the production of complex and lengthy management plans.

1a.3 All 10 elephant sites are fully operational by 2028 (Y5)	1a.3.1 Conduct a needs assessment in terms of infrastructure, vehicles, equipment, and communication at each site and re-evaluate situation annually.	Needs assessment produced for each site and reviewed each year
	1a.3.2 Provide the necessary equipment for each site, ensure that rigorous inventory, maintenance, and monitoring is in place.	All necessary equipment provided.
	1a.3.3 Provide the required construction and maintenance of infrastructure at each site	Construction and maintenance of the necessary infrastructure at each site is ongoing
	1a.3.4 Provide effective communication tools for each site, including operations rooms for information centralization and rapid response programming	Each site provided with communication tools and procedures including centralised operations rooms for information gathering and rapid response programming
	1a.3.5 Monitor the effectiveness of anti-poaching measures by promoting the use of SMART and EarthRanger at each site.	Quarterly and annual SMART reports available from each site
	1a.3.6 Strengthen collaboration with Nigerian Army for improved law enforcement and security around existing sites (joint patrols, sharing of intelligence etc).	Number of joint patrols/site/annum; # shared intelligence reports/site/annum
	1a.3.7 Ensure that each site has an annual budget sufficiently large to operate and deploy regular patrols	Ratio of operational budget/site/year to required budget

Nigeria has lost more than 99% of its original elephant population, mainly due to poaching for their ivory





## Objective 1b: Reduce illegal trade in elephant products.

**Target 1b: By 2026 (Y3), all domestic trade in ivory has been closed and by 2028 (Y5) seizures of ivory shipments originating from Nigeria have reduced by 50%.**

**Table 4: Activities Required to Achieve Objective 1b**

Objective 1b		Reduce illegal trade in elephant products
Targets	Activities	Indicators
1b.1 All existing federal and state wildlife laws are strengthened and harmonized by 2028 (Y5)	1b.1.1 Review and strengthen the draft Endangered Species (Control of International Trade and Traffic) Amendment Act 2015, the draft National Park Services Act and the National Forestry Policy in line with EIA recommendations (EIA, 2021).	Federal laws reviewed, strengthened, and harmonised with state laws, especially those states that still support elephants.
	1b.1.2 Revise/update existing forestry and wildlife laws at the state-level (Kebbi State, Oyo State, Niger State, Ogun State, Ondo State, Borno State, Bauchi State, Plateau State, Taraba State, Edo State, Rivers State and Cross River State) and increase penalties for wildlife-related crimes.	State wildlife laws reviewed, revised, and harmonised with federal legislation. Laws passed, circulated, and published.
	1b.1.2 Provide awareness raising and training for judiciary, prosecutors, and legislators as well as wildlife officers and rangers.	Number of judiciary and prosecutors trained per year.
	1b.1.3 Seek agreement on the power of certain agencies to 'compound' offences, e.g., through identification of a threshold above which such a power would not be exercised, or to seek wholesale revocation of this.	Law reviewed, amended, and published.
	1b.1.4 Strengthen border controls at key import and export points and on ivory trafficking routes.	Border controls at key import/export points and ivory trafficking routes strengthened. Number of ivory seizures per year. Number of offenders apprehended and prosecuted/year.
1b.2 Strengthen the enforcement of existing legislation and support implementation of the National Strategy on Combating Illegal Wildlife Trade and Forest Crime (2022-2026)	1b.2.1 NESREA to ensure that all domestic ivory markets closed immediately.	Zero trade in ivory by 2027.
	1b.2.2 Strengthen the new Special Wildlife Office (SWO) within the Nigeria Customs Service (and any other relevant inter-agency units) to reduce levels of ivory trafficking across Nigeria's borders.	Arrests and well publicised prosecutions by SWO increase deterrence (no. of seizures/year).
	1b.2.3 Provide capacity building for Customs, NESREA, police, and other enforcement agencies to improve skills in combating wildlife trade.	Number of staff trained, number of arrests/year, number of seizures/year.
	1b.2.4 Strengthen communication and information sharing between agencies.	Formal communication platform established.
	1b.2.5 Facilitate regular training for field staff in court prosecutions.	Number of field staff trained/year.
1b.3 The national ivory management system is strong and transparent	1b.3.1 Evaluate and improve national procedures for seized ivory management and marking, including a national database, strict chain of custody and systematic genetic sampling.	National ivory management procedures evaluated, improved, and circulated.
	1b.3.2 Improve and maintain a highly secure central storage facility for the national stock of seized ivory and other illegal wildlife products.	National system for transparent management of ivory and other illegal wildlife products established.
	1b.3.3 Assess available decentralized ivory storage locations in terms of security and storage capacity.	Decentralized ivory storage locations assessed.
	1b.3.4 Implement the marking, inventory and stock management system at all sites involved in the seizure and/or storage of ivory.	Complete the marking and inventory started by WCS and EPI.
	1b.3.5 Conduct annual audits of ivory stocks at the national level.	Annual audit verification visits.
	1b.3.6 Develop and implement an action plan for destruction of all existing ivory stockpiles.	Workshop held, and action plan available.

1b.4 An intelligence network is operational to dismantle Ivory trafficking networks	1b.4.1 Evaluate current intelligence network capacity on wildlife trafficking and identify areas for improvement.	Current capacity assessed and areas for improvement identified.
	1b.4.2 Train Customs staff within the Special Wildlife Office <sup>15</sup> to develop and manage an intelligence and investigation network.	Intelligence and investigation network established.
	1b.4.3 Train staff in data collection and transmission.	Number of staff trained.
	1b.4.4 Develop and manage informant networks around all 10 sites.	Number of Informant networks developed and managed.
	1b.4.5 Establish a HQs for the management of intelligence and information data.	Main headquarters operations room established.
	1b.4.6 Develop real-time data transmission networks so the information can be used for a timely response	Number of arrests/year, number of seizures/year. Real-time data transmission networks developed.
1b.5 Reduce opportunities for corruption in wildlife authorities at both state and federal levels	1b.5.1 Develop and establish a code of conduct for rangers and staff of wildlife authorities.	Code of conduct for staff of the wildlife authorities developed and circulated
	1b.5.2 Implement strict rules regarding corruption cases amongst wildlife authorities in line with FGN policy	Strict rules on corruption cases among wildlife authorities in place and disseminated. Number of corrupt agents penalized.
	1b.5.3 Create and train an anti-corruption unit for examination of corruption cases.	Anti-corruption unit set up and operational, at least 95% of corruption cases observed during arrests and prosecutions are documented, forwarded to competent authorities and appropriate actions are taken against the corrupt agents. No of corrupt agents penalized.



Completing an inventory of ivory stockpiles with NESREA. Author: WCS



Ivory stockpile. Author: Andrew Dunn/WCS

<sup>15</sup> The Special Wildlife Office was established by the Nigeria Customs Service in 2011 with support from Focused Conservation and funding from the US Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL).





## Objective 2: Maintain all existing elephant habitat and restore connectivity where possible.

### Target 2: No measurable loss in the size of the elephant sites, with connectivity maintained and if practically feasible habitat extent improved for all sites as a matter of urgency.

The long-term maintenance of elephant populations in Nigeria requires the protection of sufficient habitat to support viable elephant populations and allow their movement and dispersal. This requires strengthening habitat protection measures at all elephant sites and corridors (this issue is addressed in more detail in the previous Chapter 4: Land Use Planning). The use of local-level participatory land-use planning to increase the size of the elephant habitat, to limit HEC, and to contribute to climate change reduction is strongly recommended.

A large proportion of former elephant habitat across Nigeria has already been lost due to agricultural expansion, limiting the unrestricted movement of elephants and other species within their traditional range, limiting their access to essential food and water resources during changing weather conditions, and increasing levels of human-elephant conflict. Most elephants in Nigeria are now restricted to existing protected areas, making our national parks and other areas key priorities for conservation efforts in the country.

**Table 5: Activities Required to Achieve Objective 2**

Objective 2	Maintain all existing elephant habitat and restore connectivity where possible	
Targets	Activities	Indicators
2.1 Priority sites for elephant conservation identified and legally protected	2.1.1 Complete boundary demarcation and resolve boundary issues in Oban (CRNP).	Park boundary legally re-gazetted
	2.1.2 Cancel all existing concessions within the Oban Division of CRNP (Dansa Foods Ltd).	Dangote withdraws all claims to the concession.
	2.1.3 Develop strategies for the long-term management of enclave communities in Oban and Okwangwo Divisions of CRNP.	Sustainable enclave management document available
	2.1.4 Work with Rivers State Government and Andoni Local Government Area to gazette a Community Wildlife Sanctuary/Game Reserve.	Legal document available.
	2.1.5 Upgrade the conservation status of Idanre Forest Reserve to a Wildlife Sanctuary/Game Reserve for immediate and more effective management of the area.	Legal document available.
	2.1.6 Finalize process to upgrade status of Omo Forest Reserve to a Wildlife Sanctuary.	Legal document available.
	2.1.7 Creation of Itasin Wildlife Sanctuary/Game Reserve.	Legal document available.
	2.1.8 Complete boundary demarcation of southern extension of Okomu National Park to avoid further encroachment.	Legal document available.
2.2 Local land-use plans increase the size of the elephant habitat, limit HEC, and mitigate against climate change	2.2.1 Facilitate local land-use planning process at each site and develop a land-use plan.	Local land-use plan available for each site
	2.2.2 Land-use plan endorsed by local communities and LGA at each site	Land-use plan implemented at each site

2.3 Degraded elephant habitat is restored	2.3.1 Collaborate with relevant agencies and other stakeholders to promote assisted regeneration and reforestation of degraded buffer zones, degraded community lands and affected areas of the PA (Cross River, Okomu, Omo, Itasin, Borno and Idanre). Provided funds are available through the FGN Green Bond Afforestation Program, or alternatively seek funding through other means, such as carbon offsets, project-based, etc.	Area (km <sup>2</sup> ) regenerated and reforested.
	2.3.2 Engage Rivers State Government, oil company (Green Energy) and relevant civil society organizations on mangrove restoration and to eradicate invasive species (Andoni).	Plan and budget produced for eradication of invasive species and planting of mangroves.
2.4 Connectivity for elephants between elephant sites is maintained	2.4.1 Identify and protect potential corridors between elephant sites	Mapping concluded, and maps available. Number of corridors rehabilitated and protected.
	2.4.2 Develop agreements with relevant actors for the protection and/or restoration of corridors and elephant sites	Agreements developed and signed.
2.5 National and state-level policies do not damage elephant habitat or connectivity between sites	2.5.1 Federal Government of Nigeria to enforce ban on all timber exports	Timber export ban announced and enforced.
	2.5.2 Enforce the existing moratoriums on timber exploitation in Edo State and Cross River State to protect Okomu National Park and Cross River National Park.	ESG and CRSG enforce ban on logging.



Camera trap photo of forest elephant, Cross River National Park. Author: WCS





## Objective 3: Reduce levels of human-elephant conflict.

### Target 3: Human-elephant conflict reduced to acceptable levels with zero retaliatory killing of elephants and zero human fatalities by 2034.

Elephants can have severe impacts on local livelihoods through crop-raiding which often results in conflict and loss of human life. Consequently, many elephants may be killed, both legally and illegally, as a result of both formal and informal actions to control the damage they cause. Human elephant conflict was identified as a major threat at all the 10 elephant sites listed in this plan, and the problem is growing. Nigerian law does not permit the payment of financial compensation and to date, no permanent, 'fool-proof' solutions have been discovered to prevent human-elephant conflict (HEC). Therefore, a variety of locally relevant mitigation tools must be used, and potential solutions must take into consideration the origin and causes as well as the extent of these conflicts. The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) is currently piloting several measures in Yankari Game Reserve to reduce levels of HEC, and improve levels of tolerance, including elephant guardians, bee-hive fences, and watchtowers. If such measures prove to be successful, they may be replicated elsewhere in the country.

This objective is closely linked to Objective 1, because effective law enforcement is essential to limit the displacement of elephants to villages, but also to Objective 2, since the mitigation of HEC also requires measures at the federal and state level including appropriate land use planning to limit the human-elephant interface. Scientific research, including the understanding of natural seasonal movements and of disruptions to these movements, will also contribute to improved HEC management (see Objective 5). Finally, the involvement of local communities in the future economic benefits of elephant conservation and protected area management is essential to the long-term resolution of the conflict, partly as compensation for coexistence with wildlife (Objective 7), but also because they are the traditional owners of the resource, frequently with long-term traditional experience with wildlife conflict situations.

**Table 6: Activities Required to Achieve Objective 3**

Objective 3	Reduce levels of human-elephant conflict	
Targets	Activities	Indicators
3.1 Effective HEC mitigation methods developed.	3.1.1 Establish a mechanism to collect HEC data in a systematic manner at each site (such as SMART or EarthRanger).	Systematic data collection mechanism established.
	3.1.2 Establish a database on the types, extent, causes and impact of HEC in the country and mitigation measures used and available for such conflicts.	HEC database established with Federal Ministry of Environment
	3.1.3 Evaluate causes of HEC at each site, assess the need for mediation, and evaluate possible local solutions.	HEC assessment report for each site available.
	3.1.4 Recognising that each conflict situation is unique, requiring local solutions, field test different HEC mitigation strategies such as 'bee-hive fences', watchtowers and 'chilli-pepper fences' at one savanna and one forest site.	All commonly known mitigation measures tested at two different field sites. Report available and circulated.
	3.1.5 Based on the results of these studies, develop guidelines for the mitigation of HEC.	Evaluation report and guidelines circulated to all stakeholders
	3.1.6 Train field officers in conflict management with villagers.	Number of field officers trained/site

3.2 Local communities are actively involved in HEC management.	3.2.1 Appoint elephant guardians around key sites to work with wildlife authorities and local communities.	Number of elephant guardians appointed/site. Local tolerance levels for living with elephants improved (results of regular surveys).
	3.2.2 Conduct awareness raising campaigns to disseminate information on HEC strategies.	Number of people impacted by awareness raising campaign.
	3.2.3 Train and equip local communities to implement appropriate locally relevant HEC mitigation measures.	Number of farmers/communities trained and equipped to mitigate HEC.
3.3 Simple grievance redress mechanism established for reporting and monitoring HEC	3.3.1 Encourage the establishment of a simple grievance redress mechanism at each elephant site to report crop damage.	Simple grievance redress mechanism established at each site.
	3.3.2 Establish simple HEC monitoring database at each elephant site.	HEC database established at each site.
	3.3.3 Evaluate and monitor change in local attitudes towards elephants and perceptions of crop damage.	Baseline of local attitudes established and monitored at regular intervals.



Large herd of migratory elephants, Borno State. Author: Unknown





## Objective 4: Increase awareness of the importance of elephant conservation.

### Target 4: By 2026 (Y3) all relevant stakeholders are aware of the critical situation faced by Nigeria's remnant elephant populations.

Within Nigeria there is only limited awareness of the continued existence of elephants in the country and their dire predicament, and even less understanding of elephant conservation, their role in Nigerian cultures, supporting biodiversity, ecosystem services, climate change mitigation, etc. Civil servants, policy makers, legislators, law enforcement officials, politicians, community leaders, farmers and the wider public are all generally unaware of the laws that prohibit the hunting of elephants and the trade/possession of ivory.

Although some sites have active conservation education and awareness programs, it will be important to extend this to all sites. Creation of park management committees for each site will be important to help ensure that communities surrounding each site are involved in its protection and benefit financially from elephant conservation. Essential to the success of Nigeria's NEAP is the need to stimulate the awareness of and involvement of the wider community in elephant conservation.

**Table 7: Activities Required to Achieve Objective 4**

Objective 4		Increase awareness of the importance of elephant conservation
Targets	Activities	Indicators
4.1 Implement a communication awareness strategy focused on elephant conservation	4.1.1 Strengthen capacity of PA staff and support ongoing community sensitization & conservation education and awareness programs in communities surrounding Oban, Okwangwo, Okomu, Omo, Idanre and Yankari; and strengthen focus on elephant conservation.	Number of PA staff trained. Change in local attitudes & behaviours towards elephants and conservation.
	4.1.2 Establish community sensitization & conservation education and awareness programs in communities surrounding Itasin, Andoni, Borno and Kebbi.	Number of communities impacted.
	4.1.3 Develop a communication and awareness strategy to promote elephant conservation at the national level.	Strategy developed and circulated.
	4.1.4 Produce and disseminate awareness raising tools about the importance of elephant conservation, wildlife laws and government action. These awareness tools need to be tailor-made for each target group – that is school children and students for long-term conservation perspectives, communities and the general public, local and national politicians, and enforcement agencies.	Tools to raise awareness about the importance of elephant conservation produced and disseminated.
	4.1.5 Promote campaign messaging through local radio and social media to encourage national pride in Nigeria's natural heritage and national parks.	Number of people impacted by the radio/social media campaign.
	4.1.6 Work closely with international organizations such as the Wild Africa Fund to develop a target-specific communications strategy with the principal aim to reduce international demand for ivory.	International communication strategy developed to help reduce overseas demand for ivory.
	4.1.7 Establish park management committees at each of the 10 sites to help raise awareness among local communities.	Park management committee established at each elephant site.





Sustainable cocoa production on the edge of Cross River NP. Author: Ajibade Adedotun/WCS





## Objective 5: Improve levels of knowledge and understanding of elephant populations, trends, and their distribution in Nigeria

**Target 5: By 2028 (Y5), a scientifically based monitoring program is providing in-depth information on the status of the national elephant population as regular feedback for adaptive management.**

Scientific monitoring and research are essential for sound elephant conservation and management. It is essential to have a better understanding of elephant populations, trends, and their distribution in Nigeria in order to maximise the impact and effectiveness of elephant conservation and management policies and activities. Priority will be given to adaptive research activities that can be used to support conservation actions in the field (such as studies on connectivity and seasonal movements) and/or population estimates to evaluate the effectiveness (including density estimates, use of indicators such as MIKE and PIKE, tracking of elephant movements) of conservation efforts. It should, however, be recognized that acquiring 'full' knowledge about all aspects of individual elephant populations will often remain unattainable, and that decision-makers should make use of the best available information in combination with adaptive management approaches. All research and monitoring activities should be coordinated at the national level to avoid duplication of effort.

**Table 8: Activities Required to Achieve Objective 5**

Objective 5	Improve levels of knowledge and understanding of elephant populations, trends and their distribution in Nigeria	
Targets	Activities	Indicators
5.1 National database on elephants established and regularly updated	5.1.1 Conduct surveys <sup>16</sup> on population size, distribution & seasonal movements of forest and savanna elephants at all sites.	Assessment of each site completed and reports available.
	5.1.2 Track elephant movements using satellite collars (Borno, Okwangwo and Yankari).	Number of elephants fitted with satellite collars.
	5.1.3 Promote use of camera trap surveys (Oban, Okwangwo, Okomu, Omo and Yankari) to determine elephant numbers and distribution.	Survey programs implemented and reports available.
	5.1.4 Survey areas such as Kamuku/Kwiambana and Kambari as possible elephant habitat.	Survey reports available.
	5.1.5 Establish a national database on elephants and ensure that all elephant research and monitoring is coordinated at the national level	National database created within the Federal Ministry of Environment
	5.1.6 Compile and disseminate research findings	Number of research projects published.
5.2 Elephant research and monitoring results guide conservation actions at each site	5.2.1 Implement elephant research and monitoring activities at selected sites, genetic structure of populations, the study of seasonal movements through satellite collaring, health monitoring.	Number of research projects underway.
	5.2.2 Investigate impacts of climate change on elephant habitat and elephant populations	Research completed and report available.
	5.2.3 Evaluate the possible causes and socio-economic impact of HEC	Research completed and report available.
	5.2.4 Research and pilot different HEC mitigation strategies and develop guidelines	Research completed. Mitigation guidelines developed and disseminated.
	5.2.5 Evaluate the effectiveness of corridors using different techniques, such as camera traps and satellite collars	Different techniques evaluated and report available.

5.3 Elephant research and monitoring enables evaluation of conservation efforts at each site.	5.3.1 Test different elephant population inventory techniques available such as DNA analysis of dung and camera trapping methodology.	Inventory techniques tested and compared. Report available.
	5.3.2 Collect data on all elephant carcasses found at each site using standardised collection methods and report to FMEnv each year.	Regular monitoring of elephant carcasses at each site. Data collected and shared with FMEnv each year.
5.4 Research and monitoring conducted in Nigeria supports international decisions	5.4.1 Share results of elephant research and monitoring with international databases (African elephant database, MIKE, ETIS) to increase international awareness of elephant status in Nigeria.	Research and monitoring reports shared.



## Objective 6: Strengthen cooperation and understanding with neighbouring countries for improved transboundary conservation.

**Target 6: By 2028 (Y5), cooperation with neighbouring range states officially established, resulting in exchange of information and joint management of transboundary sites with elephant populations.**

Many of the issues concerning the conservation and management of elephants in Nigeria are shared with the neighbouring countries of Benin, Niger, Chad, and Cameroon. There is a transboundary population in the Lake Chad area of roughly 250 elephants (moving between Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger, and Chad) which persists despite the presence of Boko Haram, but probably because they are always on the move, avoiding places with relatively low security. Until recently elephants used to visit Gashaka Gumti National Park from Cameroon and there are also elephant movements between Benin and Nigeria.

To fully protect elephants and their habitats in transboundary areas it is important to strengthen understanding and cooperation within the region (Benin, Nigeria, Chad, Niger, and Cameroon) on numerous social, economic, and environmental issues of mutual interest and concern. International collaboration with border countries in investigations and prosecutions, as well as joint border patrols is essential for the fight against poaching and organized international trafficking of ivory.

Numerous opportunities exist for regular sharing of information and dialogue among range States at both technical and political levels including, for example, coordination of surveys and anti-poaching activities where elephant populations move across borders. Additionally, those political and economic frameworks which already exist can be used to increase the wider public perception of the importance of elephant conservation issues and encourage greater cooperation between range States.

**Table 9: Activities Required to Achieve Objective 6**

Objective 6	Strengthen cooperation and understanding with neighbouring countries for improved transboundary conservation	
Targets	Activities	Indicators
6.1 Official collaboration established at regional and international level to reduce elephant poaching in transboundary areas and dismantle ivory trafficking networks.	6.1.1 Develop and sign official collaboration protocols with bordering countries including anti-poaching harmonization, joint actions, border controls, intelligence and data exchange and prosecution facilitation.	Transboundary cooperation framework agreement signed between Nigeria and Cameroon by 2024 and other agreements by 2025.
	6.1.2 Implement joint patrols and joint border controls with neighbouring countries.	Number of joint patrols completed/year.
	6.1.3 Develop direct collaboration with law enforcement bodies in neighbouring countries to further investigations and exchange information.	Number of joint investigations completed/year. Number of arrests made/year.
	6.1.4 Strengthen collaboration with international organizations (ECOWAS) and existing networks (TRAFFIC, EPI) to promote regional collaboration for elephant conservation.	Number of collaborative networks established.
	6.1.5 Develop sample and/or data exchange networks with forensic laboratories in Africa and Asia to harmonize techniques at the international level.	Number of data exchange networks established.



6.2 Official collaboration established at regional level to promote transboundary conservation of elephants between Cameroon and Nigeria and between Benin and Nigeria	6.2.1 Establish transboundary biosphere reserve in Lake Chad area and promote exchange of information between Cameroon/Chad/Nigeria	Transboundary biosphere reserve in Lake Chad area established.
	6.2.2 Establish transboundary World Heritage Site between Cameroon and Nigeria (Okwangwo and Oban).	Transboundary World Heritage Site established.
	6.2.3 Establish transboundary working group between Benin and Nigeria (Kebbi)	Transboundary working group established.
	6.2.4 Support joint ranger patrols between Oban-Korup, Okwangwo-Takamanda, and Chad Basin-Waza.	Number of joint patrols completed.
	6.2.5 Support joint patrols with the army to improve security for wildlife and local communities	
	6.2.6 Monitor the movements of elephants across borders to support management	Monitoring mechanism established
	6.2.7 Establish mechanisms to exchange information between neighbouring countries for better monitoring of transboundary movements of elephants	Exchange mechanism established and information exchanged.



A community meeting with women on the edge of Yankari GR. Author: Ajibade Adedotun/WCS



## Objective 7: Improve cooperation and collaboration with local communities

**Target 7: By 2027, at least 3 elephant sites are providing a share of the economic benefits generated from tourism to local communities in return for cohabiting with elephants.**

While elephants do have an intrinsic value, recognition must be given to those communities that share land and resources with African elephants, and who are most affected by elephants on a day-to-day basis. It is often the case that these communities suffer the costs of living with elephants, while the benefits (such as revenue from tourism) are largely gained by those living further afield. It is important to recognise and address this imbalance, as the accrual of greater and more tangible benefits at a local level is more likely to translate directly into increased tolerance for elephants by those communities most affected. Except for Yankari, tourism does not yet generate significant revenue that could be shared with surrounding communities. It is important therefore to develop other means to improve levels of collaboration and cooperation with the local communities which surround elephant sites. One way that this could be achieved would be through improving the levels of local participation in the management of the elephant site.

**Table 10: Activities Required to Achieve Objective 7**

Objective 7		
Improve cooperation and collaboration with local communities		
Targets	Activities	Indicators
7.1 Community engagement strategy developed and implemented	7.1.1 Conduct a needs assessment for diversified, sustainable livelihoods for local communities surrounding each elephant site	Needs assessment produced for each elephant site.
	7.1.2 Support sustainable agriculture (ideally crops not preferred by elephants) for surrounding communities to reduce levels of encroachment in elephant habitat & corridors	Number of communities benefiting from sustainable agriculture projects.
	7.1.3 Work with local communities to jointly protect and conserve elephants through schemes such as elephant guardians (Yankari).	Number of elephants killed each year due to HEC. Number of people killed or injured by elephants each year. Number of ha of crops lost each year.
	7.1.4 Develop ecotourism plans for Yankari, Omo and Okomu, in collaboration with local communities, government partners and the private sector.	Ecotourism plan available for each elephant site.
	7.1.5 Strengthen local community involvement in the decision-making process and the benefits of conservation by ensuring that local communities (especially those most affected by HEC/HWC) are adequately represented on a protected area management committee (PAMC) or advisory board for each elephant site.	Number of site management committees established.
	7.1.6 Develop mechanisms to share revenue and benefits with local communities (especially those most affected by HEC/HWC) surrounding each elephant site.	Mechanism selected and established. \$ amount of revenue generated per year and shared with local communities.





## Objective 8: Ensure that Nigeria's NEAP is effectively implemented<sup>17</sup>.

### Target 8: At least 90% of Nigeria's NEAP effectively implemented by 2034.

This is an overarching operational objective of the National Elephant Action Plan (NEAP). Implementation of the NEAP will require the appointment of a coordinator and coordinating committee to regularly review implementation of the NEAP and establish guidelines for monitoring, evaluating, and reporting on the NEAP (see Chapter 7: Monitoring and Evaluation). The coordinator will be responsible for raising awareness of the NEAP and establishing and maintaining close relations with the various government partners. He/she will also be the focal point for all non-governmental partners and donors for the implementation, financing, and monitoring of all elephant conservation related activities. In collaboration with the different partners, annual NEAP workshops will assess progress of NEAP targets and objectives implementation, adapt the strategy to new potential threats and define an annual work plan, including a series of priority actions.

The NEAP will be the framework for defining the role and responsibilities of each government institution and partner. Official memorandums of understanding between different institutions and private sector partners will coordinate actions, harmonize procedures, and set up communication and data management networks. Coordination among NGOs, donors, and government research institutions will also be strengthened, to avoid duplicating efforts across the country, facilitate national capacity building, and strengthen links between scientific research and elephant population management.

The NEAP Coordinator will also monitor and evaluate the implementation of priority activities contained in the five-year Implementation Plan and will coordinate review and revision of the Implementation Plan each year. Reports and results will be collected in a central database and will contribute to an annual report. NEAP implementation will require the development of an elephant-focused communication strategy to ensure awareness and adherence from all stakeholders. The necessary actions needed for NEAP implementation are presented in Table 11 below.

**Table 11: Activities Required to Achieve Objective 8**

Objective 8	Ensure that Nigeria's NEAP is effectively implemented.	
Targets	Activities	Indicators
8.1 Establish a clear framework for NEAP implementation.	8.1.1 Appoint a NEAP Coordinator from the Federal Ministry of Environment.	NEAP coordinator appointed.
	8.1.2 Establish a National Elephant Action Plan Coordination Committee.	NEAP Coordination Committee established.
	8.1.3 Publicly launch and publicize the NEAP	NEAP officially launched with maximum publicity.
	8.1.4 Establish close collaboration with partners & donors for funding activities within the NEAP.	Collaboration established with partners & donors for funding of NEAP.
8.2 Reinforce coordination between government institutions	8.2.1 Define and clarify the roles and responsibilities of each government institution involved in each NEAP objective, target, and measure implementation.	NEAP roles clarified between different government agencies.
	8.2.2 Establish official collaboration agreements between partners for improved information exchange & coordinated implementation of NEAP activities for elephant conservation	Collaborative agreements in place for information exchange & coordination.
8.3 Reinforce collaboration with non-governmental partners and the private sector	8.3.1 Establish Memoranda of Understanding with extractive industries such as Okomu Oil Palm, Dangote, Wilmar, and Lafarge.	MoUs established.
	8.3.2 Encourage the sharing of data relevant to elephant conservation between government institutions and their partners.	Data sharing mechanism established and effective.
	8.3.3 Coordinate activities carried out by Government institutions and NGOs to ensure results are complementary and circulated.	Coordination mechanism established and effective.

<sup>17</sup> It is acknowledged that counting the size of small remnant populations is expensive, time-consuming and results in huge confidence limits. As a first step it is better to focus resources on improving their habitats, lowering poaching, and minimizing HEC.

8.4 Follow progress on the implementation of priority actions	8.4.1 Organize an annual meeting between stakeholders to monitor implementation of the NEAP and to decide on remedial measures if required.	Annual review meeting held and progress report available.
	8.4.2 Work in collaboration with funding agencies and donors for the financing of priority actions within the NEAP.	Regular communication sufficient to maintain interest and commitment from funding agencies and donors.
	8.4.3 Develop procedures for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of NEAP activities by government and partners.	Monitoring and evaluation procedures developed and implemented.
	8.4.4 Collect relevant reports and information for the NEAP and archive them in a central database.	Central database established with all relevant reports.
	8.4.5 Provide an annual report of the implementation of the NEAP for the government and funding bodies.	Annual report produced and disseminated.



# 6.0

## Financing Implementation of Nigeria's NEAP

NEAP activities that cannot be financed nationally through government budgets may be financed through either one or a combination of several modalities described below including international donor government funding, private and philanthropic funding, and Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) for carbon finance and eco-tourism.

## 6.1 Philanthropic Donor Funding

### International donor government funding

Financing Nigeria's NEAP in full will be challenging, given limited government resources and often complex procedures for attracting donor funding. International donor government funding applies to any organization that provides financial assistance to wildlife conservation or biodiversity activities in a country that is not of its origin. They may be established multilateral, regional, or bilateral institutions or agencies (such as the World Bank, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the European Union, Global Environment Facility, Biodiversity Challenge Funds<sup>18</sup> and others or non-governmental local and international organizations or Foundations (such as the Elephant Crisis Fund, UNEP African Elephant Fund, Bezos Foundation, etc.). Financial assistance may include grants, loans, scholarships, and other services. Seeking finance from bilateral and multilateral agencies often requires strong partnerships between the applicant and the Federal Ministry of Environment and Federal Ministry of Finance on one hand, and sometimes, a partnership between Government and an implementation NGO or implementation consultancy (selected by the donor).

### Private Sector Corporate Social Responsibility Funding

Another potential source of funds for Nigeria's NEAP is Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funding from the Nigerian and International private sector. Nigeria has the largest and most vibrant private sector in Africa outside of South Africa. Key sectors are oil/gas, banking, telecommunications, agriculture, construction, food/beverages, and transport. Many multinational companies now support a programme of Corporate Social Responsibility through which they aim to contribute to societal goals of a philanthropic,

activist, or charitable nature by engaging in or supporting ethically oriented practices, such as conservation. Most of these companies will have defined themes for their giving, such as education or health, but for some, funding the environment is important, particularly if their business impacts the environment. Companies will choose to give to projects where they will see a clear impact from funds given and where they can gain positive publicity. Identifying an alignment of interests is key to securing this type of finance.

## 6.2 Contemporary financing modalities (blended finance)

Blended finance is a term given to the use of public or philanthropic capital to spur private sector investment in projects aimed at achieving the UN SDGs (see subchapter 1.4 and Annex I). With increasing pressure to focus on the implementation of the SDGs, the Nigerian government is being encouraged to consider Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) to enable the investment of private capital into wildlife conservation, either through long term carbon offset concessions, park management concessions, or eco-tourism concessions. These options will be discussed briefly below:

### Carbon finance concessions

Briefly, carbon financing is a funding mechanism that puts a monetary amount on carbon emissions. A company that emits carbon dioxide because of their operations can offset these emissions by buying carbon credits from a project that sequesters carbon (by planting trees or enabling the regeneration of trees in a landscape) or a conservation project that protects forests (thereby avoiding deforestation that would have resulted in carbon emissions).

**Nigeria has the largest and most vibrant private sector in Africa outside of South Africa. Key sectors are oil/gas, banking, telecommunications, agriculture, construction, food/beverages, and transport**



<sup>18</sup> All Darwin Initiative, Darwin Plus and IWT Challenge Fund projects now fall under the umbrella of the title 'Biodiversity Challenge Funds'.



All around the world, companies and countries have declared “Net Zero” targets, meaning that by a certain date, they will have net zero carbon emissions from all of their activities. For most companies, achieving net zero will be impossible without investing in carbon offset projects.

As one might imagine, demand for carbon offset is huge as many companies are searching for credible projects with certified carbon credits they can buy.

Furthermore, Nigeria has made international commitments to meet its climate change goals through reducing carbon emissions and one way of achieving its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) towards this will be to support carbon offset projects that can generate carbon credits. So, there is both a private sector and government sector incentive to see these become a reality in Nigeria. However, packaging a conservation project is a lengthy, expensive, and highly technical process requiring international specialists to quantify the amount of carbon credits that would accrue for protecting a landscape and help a project achieve carbon credit certification. Nevertheless, the rewards can be substantial, making it worthwhile.

An exciting aspect for the NEAP is the emergence of studies looking at the value of elephants in relation to carbon credits, although it is unclear what will manifest from those projections if anything. Some experts have urged caution and we must be careful not to build false expectations. Both savanna and

forest elephants play an important role in increasing the storage of carbon and nitrogen in the soils (Berzaghi et al., 2022; Kristensen et al., 2021; Chami et al., 2019; Chami et al., 2020). Thus, elephants are important players when it comes to climate change mitigation. Research has found that wherever forest elephants roam, they promote the growth of larger, taller trees. These trees store more carbon in their biomass than the trees that would have grown in their place. Forest elephants therefore increase the amount of carbon stored by the rainforest by tilting the biological balance in favour of certain types of trees. It is clear that the total value of the carbon storage service provided by African forest elephants is much more than the value of its ivory, so the benefits from a healthy and thriving elephant population are substantial (Chami et al. 2020). This means that conservation projects that protect elephants could have more carbon credits to sell and the price per tonne of carbon sold would be greater.

An important aspect of carbon finance is the “benefit sharing mechanism” which means that besides mobilising funds for protection, a portion of the funds automatically go to government and to stakeholder communities. This gives financial and economic value of the landscape to communities and to government. This is becoming increasingly important as Africa develops rapidly. Conservation landscapes (and their elephants) must be economically relevant to government and communities if they are to survive and carbon finance is one way of achieving this.



**Carbon finance is the “benefit sharing mechanism” which means that besides mobilising funds for protection, a portion of the funds automatically go to government and to stakeholder communities giving financial and economic value of the landscape to communities and to government**



Finding the funds to develop and package a conservation project for carbon finance can be challenging, however an increasing number of companies are willing to finance the carbon development process in return for a share of the carbon credits once carbon certification has been achieved. There is also considerable donor funding available to fund the carbon development process for projects as well.

### Park management and eco-tourism concessions

An emerging conservation model across Africa is Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) concessions for park management and/or eco-tourism. African Parks pioneered the PPP model for protected area management, whereby they maintain full responsibility and execution of all management functions for a fixed period but remain accountable to the owner – that is the government in question.

**In Nigeria, Yankari Game Reserve has been managed through a co-management agreement between Bauchi State Government and the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) since 2014, while Africa Nature Investors (ANI) has signed 30-year agreements with the National Park Service for the development of Gashaka Gumti and Okomu National Parks.**

The model of long-term protected area concessions by private sector parties or the non-profit sector relies on revenue creation through various income streams that can include tourism or carbon finance (described above), with philanthropic funding in the initial stages of protected area takeover, but depending on local circumstances, with gradually declining levels of donor dependency following the high-investment development phase of the site and increasing inflows of private capital. Both the German Legacy Landscapes Fund and the UK Biodiverse Landscape

Fund seek to obtain significant and sustained funding from both public and private (philanthropic) sources, with the aim of filling the sustainability gap and thus contributing considerably to conserving biodiversity within a post-2020 framework. Both funds will finance long-term partnerships between experienced NGOs and protected area authorities, as well as indigenous and local communities, to efficiently conserve and manage protected areas and their buffer zones through concessions.

## 6.3 Financing modalities for Nigeria's NEAP

For each of the 10 elephant sites in Nigeria, a management plan together with a financing strategy needs to be developed. Nigeria does not have a strong tourism industry, however some of the sites discussed in this NEAP such as Yankari, Omo and Itasin have strong tourism concession potential. Using the PPP model for protected area management and eco-tourism, non-governmental organisations would maintain full responsibility and execution of all protected area management functions but would remain accountable to the government. In these three sites revenue through local tourism could partly offset the costs of running the protected area, but additional funding will still be required to supplement management costs.

For all 10 sites, a combination of carbon finance and funding from multilateral/bilateral agencies, private foundations and private sector CSR funding will be required in addition to government budgetary support. The development of PPP models for conservation is still new and for some governments, they can be viewed as an admission of failure or an undermining of sovereignty (Lindsey et al., 2021). However, governments should view these partnerships as strategic, proactive opportunities that will enable them to unlock funding, investment, and expertise for conservation (Lindsey et al., 2021). These partnerships will not only improve PA management, but also share the costs of protecting Africa's PAs and landscapes with the global community, build local capacity and assist in protecting the ecosystem services upon which Africa's economies depend, while stimulating rural development that will benefit local communities (Lindsey et al., 2021).



# 7.0

# Monitoring & Evaluation

This document provides a framework for the long-term conservation of forest and savanna elephants in Nigeria, identifying key goals to be achieved within ten years.

The plan focuses on elephants, it also aims to promote wider conservation goals in areas of the country where elephants still occur.

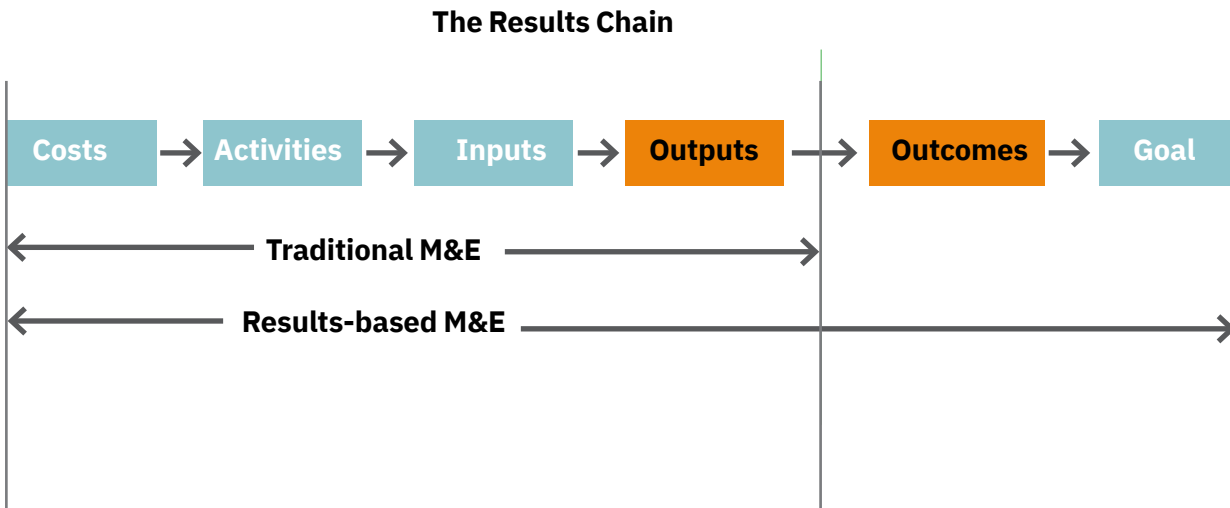
Implementation of the Nigeria NEAP is designed on the assumption that interventions in the form of activities under each of the eight objectives aligned to the African Elephant Action Plan (AEAP) will lead to strengthened management and conservation of local elephant populations and consequently to the long-term survival of the species in Nigeria. Monitoring and evaluation are the primary mechanisms to assess whether activities are meeting the objectives and their targets. Elephant conservation needs evidence-based approaches, using adaptive management, a systematic approach for improving conservation by learning from management outcomes (EPIF, 2019, Monitoring & Evaluation Framework for NEAPs).

A Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) plan is a program of work that defines what monitoring activities will take place, when and by whom, and how that information will feed back into management decisions, by re-evaluating and adjusting decisions as information comes available. An M&E plan should be simple, inexpensive, and sustainable in terms of the financial, institutional, and technical resources available. Thus,

the M&E plan provides a mechanism for continuing review and refinement. This mechanism should include ongoing compilation and review of data on the status of elephants, data on threats to elephants and their habitats, and data on the efforts taken to address these threats and build capacity.

It is important to define the spatial and temporal scales of monitoring activities, as well as the choice of suitable and meaningful indicators. Clearly identifying the assumptions for NEAP interventions will help identify indicators for monitoring both changes in threats and the effectiveness of interventions in mitigating those threats. Most importantly, indicators must be practical and realistic, and should, whenever possible, be meaningful at both the national and site level. Periodic meetings, such as NEAP Review meetings or any other meetings called by those in charge of NEAP implementation should be seen as a vital component of adaptive management: such meetings should aim to monitor progress with implementing partners for activities as well as for the overall Goal of the NEAP, making recommendations for any changes required as necessary.

**Figure 1: The Results Chain**





To track progress towards achieving a desired state, we use indicators that provide evidence that results have or have not been achieved. Indicators enable us to assess progress towards the achievement of intended outputs, outcomes, objectives, and goals. Indicators can be used at each step of the results chain and should link to each other up the chain (Fig. 1). Indicator terminology varies considerably, but here we use output and outcome indicators. Output indicators are used to measure the quantity, quality, and timeliness of the short-term results of an activity, project, or program (for instance: changes in patrol staff performance).

Outcome indicators are used to track progress of the intermediate results generated by program outputs (for instance: Proportion of Illegally Killed Elephants in key sites (PIKE), or elephant population trend in key sites). Outcome indicators are used to determine whether a Target for a specific Objective has been achieved. We should note, however, that for most types of indicators we require baseline data as a point of departure, or the initial state of the system for which we track progress. This is especially true for Outcome Indicators (Targets for the Objectives), whereas for most Output Indicators the baseline can be set when starting the activity. Ideally, for Outcome indicators baselines should be set at the year the NEAP becomes officially active.

## 7.1 The Reporting and Review Cycle

Monitoring of implementation progress is the responsibility of the FMEnv, the NEAP Coordinating Committee, the NEAP Coordinator, and various stakeholders respectively. The NEAP Coordinator is among others responsible for preparing quarterly progress and annual reports, monitoring annual work plans and output indicators. The NEAP Coordinator will advise the wildlife authorities of any delays or difficulties faced during implementation so that appropriate support or corrective measures can be adopted in a timely and appropriate manner. The NEAP Coordinator reports to the NEAP Coordinating Committee. The NEAP Coordinating Committee should be comprised of all key stakeholders active in NEAP implementation, government as well as NGOs. The NEAP Coordinating Committee should preferably be chaired by the Director of the Federal Department of Forestry, Ministry of Environment. The key stakeholders are listed below in Table 12 together with their respective responsibilities with regard to M&E (Table 12). Ideally, there should be a series of reports to monitor performance as follows:

- **Quarterly Progress Report:** report prepared by the NEAP Coordinator and contains quarterly activities and milestones for all stakeholders.
- **Annual Progress Report:** report prepared by the NEAP Coordinator and compares the approved work plan with the actual performance, identifies constraints and recommends remedial actions.

**Table 12: Summary of stakeholders and M&E responsibilities.**

Stakeholders (Events)	M&E Responsibilities
Federal Ministry of Environment (FMEnv)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare annual work plan and budget</li> <li>• Review progress reports and propose adjustments</li> <li>• Analyse, evaluate and prepare results in terms of Output and Outcome indicators, which includes Targets, to present during the annual NEAP Review Meeting</li> <li>• Check M&amp;E plan and organize annual NEAP Review Meetings</li> <li>• Liaise with donors to source financing for NEAP activities</li> </ul>
NEAP Coordinating Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The NEAP Coordinating Committee has similar responsibilities as outlined above, but FMEnv has final responsibility for any key decisions.</li> </ul>
NEAP Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Day-to-day coordination of NEAP implementation, reports to the FMEnv and to the NEAP Coordinating Committee:</li> <li>• Regular contact with all stakeholders active in NEAP implementation</li> <li>• Monitor annual work plans and output indicators</li> <li>• Propose appropriate support or corrective measures when progress is not according to plan</li> <li>• Prepare progress reports (every 3 months) and annual report</li> <li>• Review and update the M&amp;E plan annually for evaluation during the annual NEAP Review Meeting</li> <li>• Provide support in participatory M&amp;E and for the design of impact assessments</li> </ul>

Annual NEAP Review meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The annual NEAP Review meeting should bring together all stakeholders to evaluate progress in implementation of the NEAP and propose adjustments when Outputs and/or Outcomes deviate from the original plan.</li> <li>Evaluate progress of the individual activities (Output)</li> <li>Evaluate medium-term Outcome indicators (Objectives)</li> <li>Evaluate progress towards achieving the Goal (long-term)</li> <li>Discuss adjustments when required (adaptive management)</li> </ul>
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## 7.2 Log Frame for Objectives, Targets, and Indicators

**Goal: Secure elephant populations and stop their decline across Nigeria recognising their potential to provide ecological, socio, cultural and economic benefits.**

**Target: by 2034 all elephant populations are effectively protected; the domestic ivory trade has been banned; HEC has been reduced to acceptable levels, levels as compared to the 2024 baseline, with zero retaliatory killing of elephants and zero human fatalities.**

Indicators:

- Surface area of existing dispersal areas and corridors rehabilitated (km<sup>2</sup>), baseline 2024
- Surface area of new dispersal areas and corridors created (km<sup>2</sup>), baseline 2024
- Proportion of Illegally Killed Elephants (PIKE), baseline 2024
- Number of ivory seizures at entry and exit points per unit time, baseline 2024
- Estimate of the size of the national population, baseline 2024
- Number of HEC incidences per unit time, baseline 2024

Objective	Target	Indicator	Verification	Risks/Assumptions
1a- Reduce illegal killing of elephants	By 2028 (Y5) elephant numbers killed illegally will be reduced to acceptable levels (PIKE < 0.5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No. of patrols/year</li> <li>No. of patrol man days/year</li> <li>No. of rangers trained/year</li> <li>No. of rangers equipped/year</li> <li>PIKE for key sites</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SMART data</li> <li>Patrol records</li> <li>NEAPCC quarterly and annual reports.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NPS and other sites willing to share elephant carcass data.</li> <li>Political support for conservation by state governments.</li> <li>Logging interests undermine conservation efforts.</li> </ul>
1b- Reduce illegal trade in elephant products.	By 2026 (Y3), all domestic trade in ivory has been closed and by 2028 (Y5) seizures of ivory shipments originating from Nigeria have reduced by 50%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No. of LE staff trained/year.</li> <li>No. of judiciary/prosecutors trained/year.</li> <li>No. of ivory seizures/year.</li> <li>Ratio of arrests to prosecutions.</li> <li>Ratio of prosecutions to convictions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NEAPCC quarterly and annual reports.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Political will from NCS and NESREA to prosecute cases.</li> <li>Wildlife laws reviewed and revised.</li> <li>Political will to close down all domestic ivory trade.</li> </ul>
2- Maintain all existing elephant habitat and restore connectivity where possible	No measurable loss in the size of the elephant sites, with connectivity maintained and if practically feasible habitat extent improved for all sites as a matter of urgency.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No. elephants equipped with active satellite collar.</li> <li>No. of habitat corridors created.</li> <li>No of LUPs developed and implemented.</li> <li>No. of new PAs created.</li> <li>Total size of new PAs created.</li> <li>No. of existing PAs upgraded.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NEAPCC quarterly and annual reports.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Viable habitat corridors still exist in the landscape.</li> <li>Local communities and state governments willing to create and protect elephant corridors.</li> <li>Political will to cancel illegal concessions.</li> <li>Political will to enforce loggings bans.</li> </ul>



3- Reduce levels of human-elephant conflict	Human-elephant conflict reduced to acceptable levels with zero retaliatory killing of elephants and zero human fatalities by 2034	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No. of local people trained in HEC methods.</li> <li>No. of wildlife staff trained in conflict resolution management.</li> <li>No. of HEC incidents/year.</li> <li>No. of human fatalities/year.</li> <li>No. of elephants killed/year by local communities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NEAPCC quarterly and annual reports.</li> <li>HEC database.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local communities willing to try HEC mitigation measures.</li> <li>Local communities willing to support elephant conservation and to live alongside elephants.</li> </ul>
4- Increase awareness of the importance of elephant conservation	By 2026 (Y3) all relevant stakeholders are aware of the critical situation faced by Nigeria's remnant elephant populations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No. of people reached by campaign.</li> <li>% of population reached.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NEAPCC quarterly and annual reports.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effective communication methods developed.</li> </ul>
5- Improve levels of knowledge and understanding of elephant populations, trends, and their distribution in Nigeria	Target 5: By 2028 (Y5), a scientifically based monitoring program is providing in-depth information on the status of the national elephant population as regular feedback for adaptive management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No. of sites surveyed.</li> <li>No. of new research projects launched.</li> <li>Number of elephants equipped with satellite collars.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Survey reports.</li> <li>NEAPCC quarterly and annual reports.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sufficient interest from local universities and researchers.</li> <li>Research and monitor data is freely shared.</li> </ul>
6- Strengthen cooperation and understanding with neighbouring countries for improved transboundary conservation	6- By 2028 (Y5), cooperation with neighbouring range states officially established, resulting in exchange of information and joint management of transboundary sites with elephant populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No. of MoUs signed with other countries.</li> <li>No. of joint patrols per year.</li> <li>No. of joint meetings/workshops per year.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SMART data.</li> <li>Workshop reports.</li> <li>NEAPCC quarterly and annual reports.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Neighbouring countries interested in collaboration with Nigeria.</li> <li>Political will to sign transboundary agreements with neighboring countries.</li> </ul>
7-Improve cooperation and collaboration with local communities	By 2028 (Y5), at least 3 elephant sites are providing a share of the economic benefits generated from tourism to local communities in return for cohabiting with elephants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No. of local people trained.</li> <li>No. of local livelihoods supported.</li> <li>No. of PAMCs established</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minutes from PAMC meetings.</li> <li>NEAPCC quarterly and annual reports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Political will to establish PAMCs.</li> <li>Political will to share tourism revenue with local communities.</li> </ul>
8-Ensure that Nigeria's NEAP is effectively implemented	At least 90% of Nigeria's NEAP effectively implemented by 2034.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NEAPCC established.</li> <li>No. of NEAPCC review meetings held.</li> <li>% of NEAP implemented</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NEAPCC quarterly and annual reports.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Political support to appoint NEAP coordinator and establish NEAPCC.</li> <li>Funds to support NEAPCC meetings.</li> </ul>

# 8.0

# Conclusion

Nigeria is one of relatively few countries in Africa to have both forest elephants (*Loxodonta cyclotis*) and savanna elephants (*Loxodonta africana*), although both are now much depleted



Nigeria is one of relatively few countries in Africa to have both forest elephants (*Loxodonta cyclotis*) and savanna elephants (*Loxodonta africana*), although both are now much depleted. As a result of significant declines across Africa, IUCN recently classified the forest elephant as “critically endangered” and the savanna elephant as “endangered” (IUCN, 2021). The population decline of both species in Nigeria started in the 19th century due to ivory demand from Europe, and in the 20th century the decline continued as their habitat was reduced to only a fraction of its potential range due to agricultural expansion. As a result, elephants in Nigeria today are mainly restricted to protected areas and small forest fragments where they are increasingly isolated and vulnerable to extinction. Although areas of suitable habitat do occur outside of existing protected areas, elephants only occupy roughly 10,000 km<sup>2</sup> of Nigeria, around 1% of the country. Some of the large savanna elephant populations of former times such as Sambisa Game Reserve, Kainji Lake National Park, Kamuku National Park, and Kwiambana Game Reserve have recently been extirpated (although the habitat remains intact, the elephants were either killed or migrated elsewhere due to human disturbance). Smaller forest elephant populations in Taylor’s Creek Forest Reserve and Ifon Forest Reserve have also recently been extirpated. Elephants in Nigeria today can be considered as critically endangered.

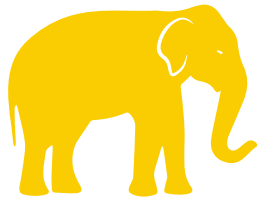
Elephants are known from ten different sites in Nigeria, with an estimated total population size of 300-400 including 200-300 forest elephants and 100 savanna elephants. Only one population contains 100 elephants, generally considered to be the

minimum number for population viability, and seven populations contain 50 or fewer elephants and so can be considered at serious risk of extinction. Although these estimates are mostly guesses, they illustrate how the formerly widespread elephant population of Nigeria has been reduced to a small number of isolated remnant groups, whereas Nigeria’s forest elephant population is particularly threatened. Loss of connectivity between elephant populations and continued habitat loss are identified as a major threat to elephants in Nigeria. The NEAP stresses the importance of spatial planning to maintain connectivity under conditions of accelerating climate change and to minimize the human-elephant interface, thereby preventing and/or reducing HEC. Even though our knowledge and understanding of Nigeria’s elephants is far from complete, the NEAP outlines the activities that are required to save them over the next ten years (see EPI, Vision 2030; EPIF, HEC Strategy, 2021).

Two forest elephant populations occur in state-managed forest reserves (Omo, Idanre) that are subject to heavy logging pressure and farm encroachment, with weak levels of support from the state governments. Two small forest elephant populations exist in unprotected sites (Itasin and Andoni) and are particularly vulnerable. Only four populations (Okomu, Oban, Okwangwo and Yankari) can be considered relatively safe. Although hunting and habitat loss are the main reasons for the continued decline of elephants in Nigeria, human elephant conflict (HEC) is a growing problem in the country and is now the main threat at several sites.



**An estimated 90% of Nigeria's elephants are found in or close to existing protected areas and only 10% occur outside of protected areas.**



**Saving Nigeria's last elephants will require a change in attitude and will demand a paradigm shift from federal and state governments towards a realization that human wellbeing and global health is connected to biodiversity loss and climate change**

HEC is expected to grow with increasing fragmentation of the remaining habitat, resulting in an exponential increase in the hard interface between humans and elephants. An estimated 90% of Nigeria's elephants are found in or close to existing protected areas and only 10% occur outside of protected areas. The importance of the country's protected area network, particularly national parks, for the continued survival of elephants in Nigeria cannot be overemphasized.

Although the plight of elephants in Nigeria is precarious, there is growing commitment towards wildlife conservation in Nigeria, and we believe that there is still hope that they can be saved. Publication of the national strategy for the survival of elephant populations in Nigeria (this document) provides us with a blueprint for the future and perhaps the last chance to save elephants and other threatened wildlife in the country. The NEAP contains all the priority actions needed to ensure the long-term survival of elephants in Nigeria including strengthening protection of core sites by improving environmental law enforcement, emphasizing the importance of land-use planning to protect corridors and maintain connectivity between sites where possible, support for transboundary conservation, reducing human-elephant conflict, promoting a positive image of elephants, and continued research to learn more about the distribution and ecology of elephants in the country.

Coordinated by the Federal Ministry of Environment, this 10-year NEAP may be our last chance to stop the decline of elephants in Nigeria and save them from extinction. The world is facing unprecedented crises of biodiversity loss, climate change and global health. Nigeria's NEAP helps tackle all three crises and offers real hope for a better future for the country where elephants and local communities can live harmoniously together.

The NEAP includes a five-year implementation plan, to be updated annually, the total cost of which is estimated to be \$29,681,000 with \$7,298,000 already secured and \$22,383,000 required. Significant resources will need to be raised to implement this strategy which will require effective partnerships between the Nigerian government and international donors, NGOs, and the private sector. Yet saving Nigeria's last elephants will require much more than just funds, it will require a significant change in attitude at all levels and will demand a paradigm shift from federal and state governments towards a realization that human wellbeing and global health is connected to biodiversity loss and climate change. By outlining the necessary conservation actions and government commitment required, it is hoped that this plan will assist in raising those funds and saving Nigeria's last elephants.



# 9.0

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# 10.0

# Appendices






# Appendix I: Mapping the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) against the Objectives of the NEAP

Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by Funding the African Elephant Action Plan through the National Elephant Action Plan for Nigeria.

How does the NEAP support the Sustainable Development Goals?





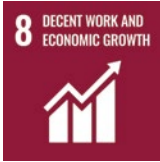

Nigeria's NEAP Objective 1: Reduce illegal killing of elephants and illegal trade in elephant products		
Sustainable Development Goals(s)	Relevant Target(s)	National Elephant Action Plan Actions - Notes
	<p>15.5: Take urgent and significant action to reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity and protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species.</p> <p>15.7: Take urgent action to end poaching and trafficking of protected species of flora and fauna and address both demand and supply of illegal wildlife products.</p> <p>15.a: Mobilize and significantly increase financial resources from all sources to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity and ecosystems.</p> <p>15.c: Enhance global support for efforts to combat poaching and trafficking of protected species, including by increasing the capacity of local communities to pursue sustainable livelihood opportunities.</p>	<p>SDG 15 covers for all Actions and their respective Activities related to combating poaching and trafficking: i.e. SOPs, training &amp; capacity building, field staff (including intelligence &amp; investigations) evaluations, inventories &amp; recruitment, equipment (including transportation and communication), infrastructure (including roads, buildings &amp; water), and maintenance.</p>
	<p>16.3: Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels.</p> <p>16.4: By 2030, significantly reduce financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime.</p> <p>16.5: Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms.</p> <p>16.6: Develop effective, accountable, and transparent institutions at all levels.</p>	<p>SDG 16 covers for all Actions and their respective Activities related to Anti-corruption and Integrity work, reviewing and amending relevant legislation, training and awareness activities regarding prosecution and judiciary, training in investigative and forensic techniques, the strengthening or establishment of specialized institutions or committees, and database establishment and maintenance.</p>
<p><b>In summary, SDGs 15 and 16 cover for all Actions under Objective 1.</b></p>		

Nigeria's NEAP Objective 2: Maintain all existing elephant habitat and restore connectivity where possible		
Sustainable Development Goals(s)	Relevant Target(s)	National Elephant Action Plan Actions - Notes
	<p>12.2: By 2030, achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources.</p> <p>12.b: Develop and implement tools to monitor sustainable development impacts for sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products.</p>	<p>SDG 12 generally covers for sound management of natural resources, whereas 12.b strongly relates to developing sustainable wildlife tourism.</p>







	<p>15.1: Ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains, and drylands, in line with obligations under international agreements.</p> <p>15.2: Promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally.</p> <p>15.5: Take urgent and significant action to reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity and protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species.</p> <p>15.9: Integrate ecosystem and biodiversity values into national and local planning, development processes, poverty reduction strategies and accounts.</p>	<p>SDG 15 covers for all Actions and their respective Activities under Objective 2, aimed at improvement and/or increasing the size of the dispersal area (habitat), which includes connectivity, land-use planning and development planning at both national and local levels.</p>
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<b>Nigeria's NEAP Objective 3: Reduce levels of human-elephant conflict</b>		
<b>Sustainable Development Goals(s)</b>	<b>Relevant Target(s)</b>	<b>National Elephant Action Plan Actions - Notes</b>
	<p>1.5: By 2030, build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social, and environmental shocks and disasters.</p>	<p>All Actions and their respective Activities related to HEC mitigation, thereby at least safeguarding food production, as well as compensation for crop loss through insurance schemes.</p>
	<p>2.3: By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists, and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment.</p> <p>2.4: By 2030, ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaption to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding, and other disasters and that progressively improve land and soil quality.</p>	<p>In summary, HEC mitigation is covered under SDGs 1 &amp; 2, while depending on the definitions of 'environmental shocks' and 'maintenance of ecosystems', in addition to some imagination, most of the other Actions under Objective 3 may be covered by these SDGs as well, in addition to SDGs 8 &amp; 15.</p>

	<p>8.10: Strengthen the capacity of domestic financial institutions to encourage and to expand access to banking, insurance, and financial services for all.</p>	
	<p>15.a: Mobilize and significantly increase financial resources from all sources to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity and ecosystems.</p>	

**Nigeria's NEAP Objective 4:**



**Increase awareness of the importance of elephant conservation.**

Sustainable Development Goals(s)	Relevant Target(s)	National Elephant Action Plan Actions - Notes
	<p>4.7: By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.</p>	<p>SDG 4, Target 4.7, SDG 5, Target 5.5, SDG 12, Target 12.8 and SDG 15, Target 15.c are especially valid in relation to developing sustainable wildlife tourism and setting up community-managed conservancies but may also cover some straightforward awareness activities related to conventional conservation of elephants.</p>
	<p>5.5: Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life.</p>	
	<p>12.8: By 2030, ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature.</p>	
	<p>15.c: Enhance global support for efforts to combat poaching and trafficking of protected species, including by increasing the capacity of local communities to pursue sustainable livelihood opportunities.</p>	




### Nigeria's NEAP Objective 5:



#### Improve levels of knowledge and understanding of elephant populations, trends, and their distribution in Nigeria

Sustainable Development Goals(s)	Relevant Target(s)	National Elephant Action Plan Actions - Notes
	<p>12.8: By 2030, ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature</p>	<p>Knowledge on elephants primarily pertains to numbers, occupancy, and movement patterns, obtained through a sound monitoring program providing feedback to management – i.e. we need to know what is out there and what they are up to prior to any intervention (baseline), to then frequently determine what's out there following interventions. Most of the Actions under Objective 5 are covered by SDG 15, especially Target 15.5.</p>
	<p>15.1: Ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains, and drylands, in line with obligations under international agreements.</p> <p>15.5: Take urgent and significant action to reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity and protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species.</p> <p>15.9: Integrate ecosystem and biodiversity values into national and local planning, development processes, poverty reduction strategies and accounts.</p>	

### Nigeria's NEAP Objective 6:


#### Strengthen cooperation and understanding with neighbouring countries for improved transboundary conservation

Sustainable Development Goals(s)	Relevant Target(s)	National Elephant Action Plan Actions - Notes
	<p>15.5: Take urgent and significant action to reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity and protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species.</p> <p>15.7: Take urgent action to end poaching and trafficking of protected species of flora and fauna and address both demand and supply of illegal wildlife products.</p>	<p>All of the Actions and their respective Activities under Objective 6 are covered by SDGs 15 &amp; 16, while SDG 17, Target 17.1 supports the development of sustainable wildlife tourism.</p>

	<p>15.a: Mobilize and significantly increase financial resources from all sources to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity and ecosystems.</p> <p>15.c: Enhance global support for efforts to combat poaching and trafficking of protected species, including by increasing the capacity of local communities to pursue sustainable livelihood opportunities.</p>	
	<p>16.3: Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels.</p> <p>16.4: By 2030, significantly reduce financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime.</p>	
	<p>17.1: Strengthen domestic resource mobilization, including through international support to developing countries, to improve domestic capacity for tax and other revenue collection</p>	

**Nigeria's NEAP Objective 7:**



**Improve cooperation and collaboration with local communities**

Sustainable Development Goals(s)	Relevant Target(s)	National Elephant Action Plan Actions - Notes
	<p>1.4: By 2030, ensure that all men and women, particularly the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance.</p> <p>1.5: By 2030, build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social, and environmental shocks and disasters.</p> <p>1b: Create sound policy frameworks at the national, regional, and international levels, based on pro-poor and gender-sensitive development strategies, to support accelerated investment in poverty eradication actions.</p>	<p>All of the Actions and their respective Activities under Objective 7 are covered by SDGs 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 13, &amp; 15, including community involvement with wildlife management, setting up community-managed conservancies, skills training, legal and financial requirements, community tourism development, etc.</p>



 <p>2 ZERO HUNGER</p>	<p>2.4: By 2030, ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaption to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding, and other disasters and that progressively improve land and soil quality.</p>	
 <p>4 QUALITY EDUCATION</p>	<p>4.7: By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.</p>	
 <p>5 GENDER EQUALITY</p>	<p>5.5: Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life.</p>	
 <p>6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION</p>	<p>6.6: Protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers, and lakes.</p> <p>6.b: Support and strengthen the participation of local communities in improving water and sanitation management.</p>	
 <p>8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH</p>	<p>8.3: Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity, and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services.</p> <p>8.9: By 2030, devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products.</p> <p>8.10: Strengthen the capacity of domestic financial institutions to encourage and to expand access to banking, insurance, and financial services for all.</p>	

	<p>9.1: Develop quality, reliable, sustainable, and resilient infrastructure, including regional and transborder infrastructure, to support economic development and human well-being, with a focus on affordable and equitable access for all.</p>	
	<p>13.1: Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries.</p>	
	<p>15.2: Promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally.</p> <p>15.9: Integrate ecosystem and biodiversity values into national and local planning, development processes, poverty reduction strategies and accounts.</p> <p>15a: Mobilize and significantly increase financial resources from all sources to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity and ecosystems.</p>	

<p>Nigeria's NEAP Objective 8: Ensure that Nigeria's NEAP is effectively implemented</p>		
Sustainable Development Goals(s)	Relevant Target(s)	National Elephant Action Plan Actions - Notes
	<p>All Targets</p>	<p>SDG 15 with most of its Targets is ultimately the key SDG that relates to all NEAP objectives.</p>
	<p>16.6: Develop effective, accountable, and transparent institutions at all levels.</p>	



## Appendix II: Implementation Plan NEAP Nigeria

### Objective 1a: Reduce illegal killing of elephants

Target 1a: By 2027 elephant numbers killed illegally will be reduced to acceptable levels (PIKE < 0.5)											
Targets	Activity	Method (Scope)	Priority 1 = high 5= lowest	Responsibility (Implementer)	Verification (Progress)	Funding (Secured) (Required)(\$US)	Timeframe (Year)				
							1	2	3	4	5
1a.1 All 10 elephant sites managed according to an approved management plan by 2028 (Y5).	1a.1.1 Develop a management plan for each elephant site according to international standards.	Management plan	1	NPS, OGSG, OSG, BASG, RSG, ANI, NCF, WCS, EWCT, WABCT, SWNDFP	Number of management plans developed	S \$20,000 R \$180,000	X	X			
	1a.1.2 Ensure that each management plan is officially approved, and sufficient funds allocated by government.	Official approval of plan and budget	1	FMEEnv, NPS, OGSG, OSG, BASG, RSG	Number of management plans officially approved. Ratio allocated (US\$) per plan to required	R \$10,000		X	X		
	1a.1.3 Develop a financing strategy to implement the management plans for each elephant site, using one or more funding options described in Chapter 6.	Financing strategy	1	FMEEnv, NPS, OGSG, OSG, BASG, RSG	Number of financing strategies available	R \$100,000		X	X		
	1a.1.4 Ensure that implementation of each management plan is regularly monitored.	Monitoring and evaluation plan	1	FMEEnv, NPS, NEAPCC, OGSG, OSG, BASG, RSG, NCF, ANI, WCS, EWCT, WABCT, SWNDFP	Number of monitoring meetings/year/site. Availability of PIKE data/site	R \$50,000	X	X	X	X	X
1a.2 All 10 elephant sites are effectively protected by well-trained, well-motivated and well-equipped rangers by 2028 (Y5)	1a.2.1 Provide basic training for rangers at each site in ranger field skills, and refresher training at least every 2 years.	Ranger training	1	NPS, OGSG, OSG, BASG, RSG, NCF, ANI, WCS, EWCT, WABCT, SWNDFP	METT/IMETT baseline established and monitored each year. Number of rangers trained, individual ranger scores in training report.	S \$100,000 R \$400,000	X	X	X	X	X

	1a.2.2 Review salary scale & working conditions for rangers to ensure compatibility between state & federal rangers.	Salary review	3	NPS, OGSG, OSG, BASG, RSG, CRSG	Difference in salary between state & federal rangers	R \$10,000	X					
	1a.2.3 Review staffing levels and capacity building requirements at each site and recruit additional rangers where necessary (e.g., Andoni, Omo and Itasin).	Staffing review	2	NPS, OGSG, OSG, BASG, RSG, CRSG	Staffing and capacity building needs assessment completed for each site. Number of additional rangers recruited/site by 2026	R \$10,000	X					
	1a.2.4 Provide necessary logistical support for ranger patrols (field rations, camping allowances, firearms etc) at all sites.	Ranger patrols and law enforcement	1	NPS, OGSG, OSG, BASG, ANI, WCS, NCF	Patrol frequency, no. of kms patrolled, no. of patrol man days completed, no. of arrests made. SMART data, annual reports from each site	S \$1,500,000 R \$3,500,000	X	X	X	X	X	
	1a.2.5 Provide necessary field equipment for rangers (boots, uniforms, tents/hammocks etc) required for anti-poaching patrols	Field equipment	2	NPS, OGSG, OSG, BASG, ANI, WCS, NCF	Basic field equipment available for patrols at each site.	S \$750,000 R \$1,750,000	X	X	X	X	X	
1a.3 All 10 elephant sites are fully operational by 2028 (Y5)	1a.3.1 Conduct a needs assessment in terms of infrastructure, vehicles, equipment, and communication at each site and re-evaluate situation annually.	Needs assessment	2	NPS, OGSG, OSG, BASG, ANI, WCS, NCF	Needs assessment produced for each site and reviewed each year	R \$20,000	X					
	1a.3.2 Provide the necessary equipment for each site, ensure that rigorous inventory, maintenance, and monitoring is in place.	Purchase equipment	2	NPS, OGSG, OSG, BASG, ANI, WCS, NCF	All necessary equipment provided.	S \$750,000 R \$1,750,000	X	X	X	X	X	
	1a.3.3 Provide the required construction and maintenance of infrastructure at each site.	Construction and maintenance of basic infrastructure	2	NPS, OGSG, OSG, BASG, ANI, WCS, NCF	Construction and maintenance of the necessary infrastructure at each site is ongoing	S \$2,000,000 R \$3,000,000	X	X	X	X	X	



	1a.3.4 Provide effective communication tools for each site, including operations rooms for information centralization and rapid response programming.	Construct communication network	2	NPS, OGSG, OSG, BASG, ANI, WCS, NCF	Each site provided with communication tools and procedures including centralised operations rooms for information gathering and rapid response programming	S \$300,000 R \$700,000	X	X				
	1a.3.5 Monitor the effectiveness of anti-poaching measures by promoting the use of SMART or EarthRanger at each site.	SMART or EarthRanger	2	NPS, OGSG, OSG, BASG, ANI, WCS, NCF	Quarterly and annual SMART reports available from each site	S \$200,000 R \$300,000	X	X	X	X	X	
	1a.3.6 Strengthen collaboration with Nigerian Army for improved law enforcement and security around existing sites (joint patrols, sharing of intelligence etc.).	Joint patrols	2	NPS, OGSG, OSG, BASG, ANI, WCS, NCF	Number of joint patrols/site/ annum; # shared intelligence reports/site/annum	S \$200,000 R \$300,000	X	X	X	X	X	
	1a.3.7 Ensure that each site has an annual budget sufficiently large to operate and deploy regular patrols.	Annual Budget	1	NPS, OGSG, OSG, BASG, ANI, WCS, NCF	Ratio of operational budget/ site/year to required budget	0	X	X	X	X	X	

## Objective 1b: Reduce illegal trade in elephant products

**Target 1b: By 2025 (Y3), all domestic trade in ivory has been closed and by 2027 (Y5) seizures of ivory shipments originating from Nigeria have reduced by 50%**

Targets	Activity	Method (Scope)	Priority 1 = high 5= lowest	Responsibility (Implementer)	Verification (Progress)	Funding (Secured) (Required) (\$US)	Timeframe (Year)					
							1	2	3	4	5	
1b.1 All existing federal and state wildlife laws are strengthened and harmonized by 2028 (Y5).	1b.1.1 Strengthen all relevant federal laws (National Wildlife Species Protection Act – Endangered Species (Control of International Trade and Traffic), the Forestry Law and draft National Park Act) in line with EIA recommendations (EIA, 2021).	Legal review	2	FMEnv, NPS, ANI, EIA	Federal laws strengthened and harmonized.	R \$50,000	X					

	1b.1.2 Revise/update existing forestry and wildlife laws at the state-level (Ogun State, Ondo State, Borno State, Bauchi State, Edo State, Rivers State and Cross River State) and increase penalties for wildlife-related crimes.	Legal review	2	OGSG, OSG, BSG, BASG, ESG, RSG, CRSG	State wildlife laws reviewed, revised, and harmonized with federal legislation. Laws passed, circulated, and published.	R \$350,000	X					
	1b.1.2 Provide awareness raising and training for judiciary, prosecutors, and legislators.	Awareness raising training	2	ANI, EIA, FC, WCS	No of judiciary and prosecutors trained/year	R \$500,000		X		X		
	1b.1.3 Amend the Endangered Species Law.	Legal review	2	FMEEnv, ANI, EIA	Law reviewed, amended, and published.	R \$50,000	X					
	1b.1.4 Strengthen border controls at key import and export points and on ivory trafficking routes.	Border controls	1	NCS, FC, WCS	Border controls at key import/export points and ivory trafficking routes strengthened. Number of ivory seizures/year. Number of offenders apprehended and prosecuted/year.	R \$500,000	X	X	X	X	X	X
1b.2 Strengthen the enforcement of existing legislation and support implementation of the National Strategy on Combating Illegal Wildlife Trade and Forest Crime (2022-2026).	1b.2.1 Close down all domestic ivory markets in the country immediately.	Combating illegal wildlife trade	1	NESREA, FMEEnv	Zero trade in ivory by 2027.	R \$10,000	X					
	1b.2.2 Strengthen the new Special Wildlife Crime Office (SWO) within the Nigeria Customs Service (and any other relevant inter-agency units) to reduce levels of ivory trafficking across Nigeria's borders.	Training	1	NCS (SWO), FC	Arrests and well publicized prosecutions by SWO increase deterrence. # seizures/year	R \$250,000	X	X	X	X	X	X
	1b.2.3 Provide capacity building for Customs, police, and other enforcement agencies to improve skills in combating wildlife trade.	Training	2	UNODC, FC, WCS	Number of staff trained, no of arrests/year, no. of seizures/year.	R \$250,000	X	X	X	X	X	X
	1b.2.4 Strengthen communication and information sharing between agencies.	Communication	2	NCS, EIA, FC, UNODC	Formal communication mechanism established.	0	X	X		X	X	
	1b.2.5 Facilitate regular training for field staff in court prosecutions.	Training	3	UNODC	Number of field staff trained/year.	R \$250,000						



1b.3 The national ivory management system is strong and transparent.	1b.3.1 Evaluate and improve national procedures for seized ivory management and marking, including a national database, strict chain of custody and systematic genetic sampling.	Evaluate and improve national procedures	2	EPI, WCS, NCS, NESREA, BASG	National ivory management procedures evaluated, improved, and circulated.	S \$50,000					
	1b.3.2 Improve and maintain a highly secure central storage facility for the national stock of seized ivory and other illegal wildlife products.	Improve storage and security of ivory	2	NCS, NESREA, WCS, EPI	National system for transparent management of ivory and other illegal wildlife products established.	S \$50,000					
	1b.3.3 Assess available decentralized ivory storage locations in terms of security and storage capacity.	Storage capacity assessment	2	FMEnv, NESREA, NCS	Decentralized ivory storage locations assessed.	R \$1,000	X				
	1b.3.4 Implement the marking, inventory and stock management system at all sites involved in the seizure and/or storage of ivory.	Stockpile management system	3	WCS, EPI, NCS, NESREA	Complete the marking and inventory started by WCS and EPI.	S \$20,000	X				
	1b.3.5 Conduct annual audits of ivory stocks at the national level.	Annual audit	3	WCS, EPI, NCS, NESREA	Annual audit verification visits.	S \$10,000	X	X	X	X	X
	1b.3.6 Develop and implement an action plan for destruction of all existing ivory stockpiles.	Develop action plan for destruction of ivory stockpiles	2	FMEnv, NCS, NESREA, EPI	Workshop held, and action plan available.	R \$10,000	X				
1b.4 An intelligence network is operational to dismantle Ivory trafficking networks.	1b.4.1 Evaluate current intelligence network capacity on wildlife trafficking and identify areas for improvement.	Evaluation of intelligence capacity	3	FC, NCS	Current capacity assessed and areas for improvement identified.	R \$10,000	X				
	1b.4.2 Train Customs staff within the Wildlife Crimes Unit to develop and manage an intelligence and investigation network.	Training	2	FC	Intelligence and investigation network established.	R \$10,000	X				

	1b.4.3 Train staff in data collection and transmission.	Training	3	NCS	Number of staff trained.	R \$10,000	X					
	1b.4.4 Develop and manage informant networks around all 10 sites.	Manage informant networks	2	NPS, FMEnv	Number of Informant networks developed and managed.	R \$250,000	X	X	X	X	X	X
	1b.4.5 Establish a HQs for the management of intelligence and information data.	Management of intelligence and data	3	NPS, BASG, ANI, WCS	Operations room established at each site.	R \$100,000	X					
	1b.4.6 Develop real-time data transmission networks so the information can be used for a timely response.	Real time management of intelligence and data	3	NPS, WCS, ANI	Real-time data transmission networks developed. # arrests/year, # seizures/year.	R \$500,000	X	X	X	X	X	X
1b.5 Reduce opportunities for corruption in wildlife departments at both state and federal levels.	1b.5.1 Develop and establish a code of conduct for rangers and staff of wildlife departments.	Code of conduct	1	NPS, WCS, ANI	Code of conduct for staff of the wildlife authorities developed and circulated.	R \$10,000	X					
	1b.5.2 Implement strict rules regarding corruption cases amongst wildlife authorities in line with FGN policy.	Anti-corruption policy	1	NPS, FMEnv	Strict rules on corruption cases among wildlife authorities in place and disseminated.	0	X					
	1b.5.3 Create and train an anti-corruption unit for examination of corruption cases.	Implementation of anti-corruption policy	1	NPS. FMEnv	Anti-corruption unit set up and operational, at least 95% of the cases corruption observed during arrests and prosecutions are documented, forwarded to competent authorities and appropriate actions are taken against the corrupt agents.	R \$10,000	X		X			



## Objective 2: Maintain all existing elephant habitat and restore connectivity where possible

Target 2: No measurable loss in the size of the elephant sites, with connectivity maintained and if practically feasible habitat extent improved for all sites by 2032											
Targets	Activity	Method (Scope)	Priority 1 = high 5= lowest	Responsibility (Implementer)	Verification (Progress)	Funding (Secured) (Required) (\$US)	Timeframe (Year)				
							1	2	3	4	5
2.1 Priority sites for elephant conservation identified and legally protected.	2.1.1 Complete boundary demarcation and resolve boundary issues in Oban (CRNP).	Boundary demarcation	1	NPS, CRSG, WCS	Park boundary legally re-gazetted	R \$100,000	X	X			
	2.1.2 Cancel all existing concessions within the Oban Division of CRNP (Dansa Foods Limited).	Protect territorial integrity of national park	1	NPS, CRSG	Dangote withdraws all claims to the concession.	0	X				
	2.1.3 Develop strategies for the long-term management of enclave communities in Oban and Okwangwo Divisions of CRNP.	Enclave management	1	NPS, CRSG, WCS	Sustainable enclave management document available	R \$10,000	X				
	2.1.4 Work with Rivers State Government and Andoni Local Government Area to gazette a Community Wildlife Sanctuary.	Create wildlife sanctuary	1	RSG	Legal document available.	R \$10,000	X				
	2.1.5 Upgrade the conservation status of Idanre Forest Reserve to a Wildlife Sanctuary for immediate and more effective management of the area.	Create wildlife sanctuary	1	OSG, SWNDFP	Legal document available.	R \$10,000	X				
	2.1.6 Upgrade status of Omo Forest Reserve to a Wildlife Sanctuary.	Create wildlife sanctuary	1	OGSG, NCF	Legal document available.	R \$10,000	X				
	2.1.7 Creation of Itasin Wildlife Sanctuary.	Create wildlife sanctuary	1	OGSG, EWCT, WABCT	Legal document available.	R \$10,000	X				
	2.1.8 Complete boundary demarcation of southern extension of Okomu National Park to avoid further encroachment.	Boundary demarcation	1	NPS, ANI, ESG	Legal document available.	R \$50,000		X			

2.2 Local land-use plans increase the size of the elephant habitat, limit HEC, and mitigate against climate change.	2.2.1 Facilitate local land-use planning process at each site and develop a land-use plan.	Land use planning	1		Local land-use plan available for each site.	R \$100,000	X				
	2.2.2 Land-use plan endorsed by local communities and LGA at each site.	Land use planning	1		Land-use plan implemented at each site.	R \$20,000		X			
2.3 Degraded elephant habitat is restored.	2.3.1 Collaborate with relevant agencies and other stakeholders to promote assisted regeneration and reforestation of degraded buffer zones, degraded community lands and affected areas of the PAs (Cross River, Okomu, Omo, Itasin, Borno and Idanre), provided funds are available through the FGN Green Bond Afforestation Program, or alternatively seek funding through other means, such as carbon offsets, project-based, etc.	Tree planting	4	FRIN, NCF	Area (km <sup>2</sup> ) regenerated and reforested.	R \$100,000	X	X	X	X	X
	2.3.2 Engage the State Govt., oil company (Green Energy) and relevant civil society organizations on mangrove restoration and to eradicate invasive species (Andoni).	Mangrove restoration	4	RSG	Plan and budget produced for eradication of invasive species.	R \$100,000	X	X	X	X	X
2.4 Connectivity for elephants between elephant sites is maintained.	2.4.1 Identify and protect potential corridors between elephant sites.	Corridor protection	1	NPS, BASG, OSG, ESG, ANI, WCS	Mapping concluded, and maps available. Number of corridors rehabilitated and protected.	R \$200,000	X	X	X	X	X
	2.4.2 Develop agreements with relevant actors for the protection and/or restoration of corridors and elephant sites.	Corridor rehabilitation	1	NPS, BASG, OSG, ESG, ANI, WCS	Agreements developed and signed.	R \$200,000	X	X	X	X	X
2.5 National and state-level policies do not damage elephant habitat or connectivity between sites.	2.5.1 Federal Government of Nigeria to enforce ban on all timber exports.	Timber export ban	1	FGN	Timber export ban announced and enforced.	0	X				
	2.5.2 Enforce a moratorium on timber exploitation in Edo State and Cross River States to protect Okomu National Park and Cross River National Park.	State-level timber exploitation ban	1	ESG, CRSG	ESG and CRSG enforce existing ban on logging.	R \$500,000	X	X	X	X	X



## Objective 3: Reduce levels of human-elephant conflict

Target 3: Human-elephant conflict reduced to acceptable levels with zero retaliatory killing of elephants and zero human fatalities by 2032												
Targets	Activity	Method (Scope)	Priority 1 = high 5= lowest	Responsibility (Implementer)	Verification (Progress)	Funding (Secured) (Required) (\$US)	Timeframe (Year)					
							1	2	3	4	5	
3.1 Effective HEC mitigation methods developed.	3.1.1 Establish a mechanism to collect HEC data in a systematic manner at each site (SMART or EarthRanger).	SMART or EarthRanger	2	NPS, ANI, WCS	Systematic data collection mechanism established.	R \$20,000	X					
	3.1.2 Establish a database on the types, extent, causes and impact of HEC in the country and mitigation measures used and available for such conflicts.	Database management	3	NEAPCC, FMEnv	HEC database established with Federal Ministry of Environment.	R \$10,000						
	3.1.3 Evaluate causes of HEC at each site, assess the need for mediation, and evaluate possible local solutions.	Conflict assessment	1	NEAPCC, FMEnv, NPS, ANI, NCF, WCS, local universities	HEC assessment report for each site available.	R \$20,000	X					
	3.1.4 Recognising that each conflict situation is unique, requiring local solutions, field test different HEC mitigation strategies such as 'bee-hive fences', watchtowers and 'chilli-pepper fences' at one savanna and one forest site.	Conflict mediation	2	WCS, BASG, NPS, ANI, ECF	All commonly known mitigation measures tested at two different field sites. Report available and circulated.	S \$50,000	X	X	X			
	3.1.5 Based on the results of these studies, develop guidelines for the mitigation of HEC.	Mitigation of HEC	2	FMEnv, NPS, WCS, ANI, NCF	Evaluation report and guidelines circulated to all stakeholders.	R \$10,000	X					
	3.1.6 Train field officers in conflict management with villagers.	Training	2	NPS, OGSG, OSG, ESG, KSG, BSG, CRSG	Number of field officers trained/site.	R \$100,000	X	X	X	X	X	

3.2 Local communities are actively involved in HEC management.	3.2.1 Appoint elephant guardians around key sites to work with wildlife authorities and local communities.	Elephant guardians	2	NPS, OGSG, OSG, ESG, KSG, BSG, CRSG	Number of elephant guardians appointed/ site. Local tolerance levels for living with elephants improved (results of regular surveys).	R \$200,000	X	X	X	X	X
	3.2.2 Conduct awareness raising campaigns to disseminate information on HEC strategies.	Education and awareness	2	FMEnv, NPS, BASG, OGSG, WCS, NCF, ANI	Number of people impacted by awareness raising campaign.	R \$100,000	X	X	X	X	X
	3.2.3 Train and equip local communities to implement appropriate locally relevant HEC mitigation measures.	Mitigation of HEC	2	NPS, WCS, NCF, ANI	Number of farmers/ communities trained and equipped to mitigate HEC.	R \$500,000	X	X	X	X	X
3.3 Simple grievance redress mechanism established for reporting and monitoring HEC	3.3.1 Encourage the establishment of a simple grievance redress mechanism at each elephant site to report crop damage	grievance redress mechanism	1	NPS, ANI, NCF, WCS	Simple grievance redress mechanism established at each site.	S \$8,000 R \$12,000	X				
	3.3.2 Establish simple HEC monitoring database at each elephant site	HEC monitoring	3	NPS, ANI, NCF, WCS	HEC database established at each site.	R \$10,000	X				
	3.3.3 Evaluate and monitor change in local attitudes towards elephants and perceptions of crop damage	KAB survey	3	NPS, ANI, NCF, WCS	Baseline of local attitudes established and monitored at regular intervals.	R \$100,000	X		X		X



## Objective 4: Increase awareness of the importance of elephant conservation

Target 4: By 2028 (Y5) all relevant stakeholders are aware of the critical situation faced by Nigeria's remnant elephant populations											
Targets	Activity	Method (Scope)	Priority 1 = high 5= lowest	Responsibility (Implementer)	Verification (Progress)	Funding (Secured) (Required) (\$US)	Timeframe (Year)				
							1	2	3	4	5
4.1 Implement a communication awareness strategy focused on elephant conservation.	4.1.1 Strengthen capacity of PA staff & support ongoing community sensitization & conservation education & awareness programs in communities surrounding Oban, Okwangwo, Okomu, Omo, Idanre & Yankari; & strengthen focus on elephant conservation.	Conservation education	2	NPS, WCS, ANI, NCF	Number of PA staff trained. Change in local attitudes & behaviours towards elephants and conservation.	S \$250,000 R \$50,000	X	X	X	X	X
	4.1.2 Establish community sensitization & conservation education and awareness programs in communities surrounding Itasin, Andoni, Borno and Kebbi.	Conservation education	2	OGSG, RSG, EWCT, WABCT, KSG, BSG	Number of communities impacted.	R \$200,000	X	X	X	X	X
	4.1.3 Develop a communication & awareness strategy to promote elephant conservation at national level.	Conservation education	3	NPS, WCS, ANI, NCF	Strategy developed and circulated.	R \$10,000	X				
	4.1.4 Produce & disseminate awareness raising tools about the importance of elephant conservation, wildlife laws and government action.	Conservation education	3	FMEEnv, NPS	Tools to raise awareness about the importance of elephant conservation produced and disseminated.	R \$50,000	X	X	X	X	X
	4.1.5 Promote campaign messaging through local radio and social media to encourage national pride in Nigeria's natural heritage and national parks.	Radio and social media campaign	2	FMEEnv, NPS	Number of people impacted by the radio/social media campaign.	R \$250,000	X	X	X	X	X

4.1.6 Work closely with international organizations such as WildAid to develop a target-specific communications strategy with the principal aim to reduce international demand for ivory.	Demand reduction communication campaign	2	WildAid	International communication strategy developed to help reduce overseas demand for ivory.	R \$50,000	X	X	X	X	X
4.1.7 Establish PA management committees at 10 sites to help raise awareness among local communities.	Establish PA management committees	3	NPS, BASG	Park management committee established at each elephant site.	R \$20,000	X				

## Objective 5: Improve levels of knowledge and understanding of elephant populations, trends and their distribution in Nigeria

**Target 5: By 2028 (Y5), a scientifically based monitoring program is providing in-depth information on the status of the national elephant population as regular feedback for adaptive management**

Targets	Activity	Method (Scope)	Priority 1 = high 5 = lowest	Responsibility (Implementer)	Verification (Progress)	Funding (Secured) (Required) (\$US)	Timeframe (Year)				
							1	2	3	4	5
5.1 National database on elephants established and regularly updated.	5.1.1 Conduct surveys <sup>19</sup> on population size, distribution & seasonal movements of forest and savanna elephants at all sites.	Line transects, dung counts, aerial survey	2	FMEEnv, NEAPCC, NPS, OGSG, RSG, OSG, WCS, NCF, SWNDFP, EWCT, WABCT, ANI	Assessment of each site completed and report available.	S \$20,000 R \$80,000	X	X	X	X	X
	5.1.2 Track elephant movements using satellite collars (Borno, Okwangwo and Yankari).	Satellite collaring	2	NPS, WCS, BASG	Number of elephants fitted with satellite collars.	S \$20,000 R \$40,000	X	X	X	X	X
	5.1.3 Promote use of camera trap surveys (Oban, Okwangwo, Okomu, Omo, Itasin and Yankari) to determine elephant numbers and distribution.	Camera trapping	2	NPS, OGSG, NCF, ANI, EWCT, WCS	Survey programs implemented and reports available.	S \$30,000 R \$70,000	X	X	X	X	X
	5.1.4 Establish a national database on elephants and ensure that all elephant research and monitoring is coordinated at a national level.	Database	3	FMEEnv, NEAPCC	National database created within the Federal Ministry of Environment.	R \$10,000	X				

<sup>19</sup> It is acknowledged that counting the size of small remnant populations is expensive, time-consuming and results in huge confidence limits. As a first step it is better to focus resources on improving their habitats, lowering poaching, and minimizing HEC.



	5.1.5 Compile and disseminate research findings.	Email listserve	4	FMEEnv, NEAPCC	Number of research projects published.	R \$10,000	X	X	X	X	X
5.2 Elephant research and monitoring results guide conservation actions at each site.	5.2.1 Implement elephant research and monitoring activities at selected sites, genetic structure of populations, the study of seasonal movements through satellite collaring, health monitoring.	Genetic analysis, health monitoring, satellite collaring	4	Local universities, NCF, ANI, SWNDFP, WCS	Number of research projects underway.	S \$20,000 R \$80,000	X	X	X	X	X
	5.2.2 Investigate impacts of climate change on elephant habitat and elephant populations.	Habitat monitoring & monitoring elephant movements	4	Local universities, NCF, WCS, ANI	Research completed and report available.	R \$100,000	X	X			
	5.2.3 Evaluate the possible causes and socio-economic impact of HEC.	Socio-economic surveys	3	Local universities, NCF, WCS, ANI	Research completed and report available.	R \$50,000	X	X	X		
	5.2.4 Research and pilot different HEC mitigation strategies and develop guidelines.	Elephant guardians, watchtowers, beehive fences, chilli fences etc.	1	Local universities, NCF, WCS, ANI, SWNDFP, EWCT, WABCT	Research completed. Mitigation guidelines developed and disseminated.	S \$50,000 R \$100,000	X	X	X		
	5.2.5 Evaluate the effectiveness of corridors using different techniques, such as camera traps and satellite collars.	Camera traps and satellite collars	4	WCS, NCF, ANI	Different techniques evaluated and report available.	R \$50,000	X	X	X		
5.3 Elephant research and monitoring enables evaluation of conservation efforts at each site.	5.3.1 Test different elephant population inventory techniques available such as DNA analysis of dung and camera trapping methodology.	DNA analysis of dung, camera trapping	4	NPS, NCF, WCS, ANI, SWBDFP, EWCT, WABCT, local universities	Inventory techniques tested and compared. Report available.	R \$100,000					
5.4 Research and monitoring conducted in Nigeria supports international decisions.	5.3.2 Collect data on all elephant carcasses found at each site using standardised collection methods and report to FMEEnv each year.	Ranger patrols using SMART or GPS	3	NPS, NCF, WCS, ANI, SWNDFP, EWCT, WABCT, RSG, OSG	Regular monitoring of elephant carcasses at each site. Data collected and shared with FMEEnv each year.	S \$10,000	X	X	X	X	X

	5.4.1 Share results of elephant research and monitoring with international databases (African elephant database, MIKE, ETIS) to increase international awareness of elephant status in Nigeria.	Email and attendance at international workshops	3	FMEEnv, NEAPCC	Research and monitoring reports shared.	R \$20,000	X	X	X	X	X
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## Objective 6: Strengthen cooperation and understanding with neighboring countries for improved transboundary conservation

**Target 6: By 2028 (Y5), cooperation with neighboring range states officially established, resulting in exchange of information and joint management of transboundary sites with elephant populations**

Targets	Activity	Method (Scope)	Priority 1 = high 5= lowest	Responsibility (Implementer)	Verification (Progress)	Funding (Secured) (Required) (\$US)	Timeframe (Year)				
							1	2	3	4	5
6.1 Official collaboration established at regional and international level to reduce elephant poaching in transboundary areas and dismantle ivory trafficking networks.	6.1.1 Develop and sign official collaboration protocols with bordering countries including anti-poaching harmonization, joint actions, border controls, intelligence and data exchange and prosecution facilitation.	International meetings and conferences	3	FMEEnv, NCS	Number of data exchange networks established.	R \$50,000	X	X	X		
	6.1.2 Implement patrols, joint seizures, and border control with bordering countries.	Joint patrols	3	NPS, NCS	Number of joint patrols completed & number of seizures.	R \$100,000	X	X	X	X	X
	6.1.3 Develop direct collaboration with law enforcement bodies in neighbouring countries to further investigations and exchange information.	Contact established by phone and email and information exchanged	3	NPS, NCS	Number of data exchange networks established.	R \$50,000	X	X	X	X	X
	6.1.4 Strengthen collaboration with international organizations (ECOWAS) and existing networks (TRAFFIC, EPI) to promote regional collaboration for elephant conservation.	Contact established by phone and email to promote regional collaboration	4	FMEEnv, NEAPCC	Number of data exchange networks established.	R \$10,000	X	X	X	X	X

	6.1.5 Develop sample and/or data exchange networks with forensic laboratories in Africa and Asia to harmonize techniques at the international level.	Contact established by phone and email to develop exchange and collaboration with forensic laboratories	4	FMEnv, NCS	Number of contacts or networks established with forensic laboratories.	R \$10,000	X						
6.2 Official collaboration established at regional level to promote transboundary conservation of elephants between Cameroon and Nigeria and between Benin and Nigeria.	6.2.1 Establish transboundary biosphere reserve in Lake Chad and promote exchange of information between Cameroon/Chad/Nigeria	International agreement facilitated by UNESCO	4	UNESCO, FMEnv, MAB, BSG	Transboundary biosphere reserve in Lake Chad area established.	S \$100,000	X						
	6.2.2 Establish transboundary World Heritage Site between Cameroon and Nigeria (Okwangwo and Oban).	International agreement facilitated by UNESCO	3	UNESCO, FMEnv, NPS, CRSG, WCS	Transboundary World Heritage Site established.	S \$100,000	X	X					
	6.2.3 Establish transboundary working group between Benin and Nigeria (Kebbi).	Working group	3	FMEnv, NPS, KSG	Transboundary working group established.	R \$10,000	X						
	6.2.4 Support joint ranger patrols between Oban and Korup, Okwangwo and Takamanda, and Chad Basin and Waza (security permitting).	Ranger patrols	3	NPS, WCS, WWF Cameroon	Number of joint patrols completed.	S \$50,000 R \$50,000	X	X	X	X	X		
	6.2.5 Monitor the movements of elephants across borders to support management.	Monitoring mechanism, ranger patrols	3	FMEnv, NPS, WCS	Monitoring mechanism established	S \$20,000 R \$30,000	X	X	X	X	X		
	6.2.6 Establish mechanisms to exchange information between neighbouring countries for better monitoring of transboundary movements of elephants.	Mechanism for information exchange: email and phone	3	FMEnv, NPS	Exchange mechanism established and information exchanged.	R \$10,000	X						



## Objective 7: Improve cooperation and collaboration with local communities

Target 7: By 2034, at least 3 elephant sites are providing a share of the economic benefits generated from tourism to local communities in return for cohabiting with elephant

Targets	Activity	Method (Scope)	Priority 1 = high 5= lowest	Responsibility (Implementer)	Verification (Progress)	Funding (Secured) (Required)(\$US)	Timeframe (Year)				
							1	2	3	4	5
7.1 Community engagement strategy developed and implemented.	7.1.1 Conduct a needs assessment for alternative, sustainable livelihoods for local communities surrounding each elephant site.	Socio-economic surveys	2	NPS, OGSG, OSG, RSG, ANI, NCF, EWCT, WABCT, SWNDFP, WCS, WABCT	Needs assessment produced for each elephant site.	S \$60,000 R \$140,000	X				
	7.1.2 Support sustainable agriculture for surrounding communities to reduce levels of encroachment in elephant habitat & corridors.	Sustainable farming practices	1	NPS, BASG, OGSG, OSG, BSG, RSG, NCF, ANI, WCS, SWNDFP, EWCT, WABCT	Number of communities benefiting from sustainable agriculture projects.	S \$500,000 R \$2,000,000	X	X	X	X	X
	7.1.3 Work with local communities to jointly protect and conserve elephants through schemes such as elephant guardians (Yankari).	Elephant guardian network	2	NPS, BASG, OGSG, OSG, BSG, RSG, NCF, ANI, WCS, SWNDFP, EWCT, WABCT	Number of elephants killed each year due to HEC.	S \$50,000 R \$450,000	X	X	X	X	X
	7.1.4 Develop ecotourism plans for each relevant site in collaboration with local communities, government partners and the private sector.	Tourism plan	5	NPS, BASG, OGSG, OSG, CRSG, BSG, RSG, NCF, ANI, WCS, EWCT, WABCT, SWNDFP	Ecotourism plan available for each elephant site.	R \$100,000		X			
	7.1.5 Strengthen local community involvement in the decision-making process and the benefits of conservation by ensuring that local communities (especially those most affected by HEC/HWC) are adequately represented on a management committee/advisory board for each elephant site.	management committee or advisory board	2	NPS, BASG, OGSG, OSG, CRSG, BSG, RSG, NCF, ANI, WCS, SWNDFP, EWCT, WABCT	Number of site management committees established.	R \$100,000	X	X	X	X	X
	7.1.6 Develop mechanisms to share benefits with local communities (especially those most affected by HEC/HWC) surrounding each elephant site.	Benefit sharing mechanism	2	NPS, BASG, OGSG, OSG, CRSG, BSG, RSG, NCF, ANI, WCS, SWNDFP, EWCT, WABCT	Mechanism selected and established. \$ amount of revenue generated per year and shared with local communities.	R \$100,000	X				

## Objective 8: Ensure that Nigeria's NEAP is effectively implemented

Target 8: At least 90% of Nigeria's NEAP effectively implemented by 2034.											
Targets	Activity	Method (Scope)	Priority 1 = high 5= lowest	Responsibility (Implementer)	Verification (Progress)	Funding (Secured) (Required)(\$US)	Timeframe (Year)				
							1	2	3	4	5
8.1 Establish a clear framework for NEAP implementation.	8.1.1 Appoint a NEAP Coordinator from the Federal Ministry of Environment.	NEAP Coordinator	1	FMEnv	NEAP coordinator appointed.	0	X				
	8.1.2 Establish a National Elephant Action Plan Coordination Committee	NEAP Coordination Committee (NEAPCC)	1	FMEnv	NEAP Coordination Committee established.	0	X				
	8.1.3 Publicly launch and publicize the NEAP	NEAP public launch	1	NEAPCC, WCS, EPI, FMEnv, NPS	NEAP officially launched with maximum publicity.	S \$10,000	X				
	8.1.4 Establish close collaboration with partners & donors for funding activities within the NEAP	NEAP Coordination Committee (NEAPCC)	1	NEAPCC	Collaboration established with partners & donors for funding of NEAP.	0					
	8.1.5 Establish clear and measurable targets for each of the 8 NEAP objectives	NEAP Coordination Committee (NEAPCC)	2	NEAPCC	Targets established for the 8 NEAP objectives.	0					
8.2 Reinforce coordination between government institutions	8.2.1 Define and clarify the roles and responsibilities of each government institution involved in each NEAP objective, target, and measure implementation.	NEAP Coordination Committee (NEAPCC)	2	NEAPCC	NEAP roles clarified between different government agencies.	0					
	8.2.2 Establish official collaboration agreements between partners for improved information exchange & coordinated implementation of NEAP activities for elephant conservation.	collaboration agreements and MOUs	3	FMEnv, NEAPCC, NPS	Collaborative agreements in place for information exchange & coordination.	R \$10,000	X	X			

8.3 Reinforce collaboration with non-governmental partners and the private sector.	8.3.1 Establish Memoranda of Understanding with extractive industries such as Okomu Oil Palm Company, Dangote, Wilmar, Green Energy, and Lafarge etc.	MOUs	2	NEAPCC, FMEnv, NPS	MoUs established.	R \$50,000		X	X			
	8.3.2 Encourage the sharing of data relevant to elephant conservation between government institutions and their partners.		2	NEAPCC	Data sharing mechanism established and effective.	0	X	X	X	X	X	
	8.3.3 Coordinate activities carried out by Government institutions and NGOs to ensure results are complementary and circulated.		3	FMEnv, NPS, NEAPCC	Coordination mechanism established and effective.	0	X	X	X	X	X	
8.4 Follow progress on the implementation of priority actions.	8.4.1 Organize an annual meeting between stakeholders to monitor implementation of the NEAP and to decide on remedial measures if required.	Annual meeting	2	FMEnv, NPS, NEAPCC	Annual review meeting held and progress report available.	R \$50,000	X	X	X	X	X	
	8.4.2 Work in collaboration with funding agencies and donors for the financing of priority actions within the NEAP.	Collaborative relationships with donors and funding agencies	1	NEAPCC, WCS, ANI, NCG, SWNFDFP	Regular communication sufficient to maintain interest and commitment from funding agencies and donors.	0	X	X	X	X	X	
	8.4.3 Develop procedures for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of government and partners activities within the NEAP.	Monitoring and evaluation	2	NEAPCC	Monitoring and evaluation procedures developed and implemented.	0	X					
	8.4.4 Collect relevant reports and information for the NEAP and archive them in a central database.	Database management	3	FMEnv	Central database established with all relevant reports.	R \$10,000	X	X	X	X	X	
	8.4.5 Provide an annual report of the implementation of the NEAP for the government and funding bodies.	Annual report		NEAPCC, FMEnv	Annual report produced and disseminated.	R \$10,000	X	X	X	X	X	

**Total Secured: \$7,298,000**

**Total Required: \$22,383,000**

**Grand Total: \$29,681,000**



## Appendix III: List of Workshop Participants

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\* attended via Zoom





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