



IVORY DEMAND IN THAILAND

WILDAID

ABOUT WILDAID

WildAid's mission is to end the illegal wildlife trade in our lifetimes by reducing demand through public awareness campaigns and providing comprehensive marine protection.

The illegal wildlife trade is estimated to be worth over \$10 billion (USD) per year and has drastically reduced many wildlife populations around the world. Just like the drug trade, law and enforcement efforts have not been able to resolve the problem. Every year, hundreds of millions of dollars are spent protecting animals in the wild, yet virtually nothing is spent on stemming the demand for wildlife parts and products. WildAid is the only organization with a mission focused on reducing the demand for these products, with the strong and simple message: **When the buying stops, the killing can too.**

Via public service announcements and short-form documentary pieces, WildAid partners with Save the Elephants and African Wildlife Foundation to educate consumers and to reduce the demand for ivory products worldwide. Through our highly leveraged pro-bono media distribution outlets, our message reaches hundreds of millions of people each year in China alone.

www.wildaid.org

CONTACT INFORMATION

WILDAID

333 Pine Street #300
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415.834.3174

Christina Vallianos
vallianos@wildaid.org

PARTNERS

Save the Elephants
African Wildlife Foundation

PHOTOGRAPHERS

Poulomee Basu
Kristian Schmidt
Vichan Poti
Chris Schmid

COVER PHOTO

Chris Schmid

EVERY YEAR, UP TO



33,000 ELEPHANTS
ARE KILLED FOR THEIR IVORY

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Growing affluence in Asia has produced a new class of ivory consumers who have reignited demand and stimulated the illegal ivory trade, resulting in an escalating poaching crisis. A study published in July 2014 found that more than 100,000 elephants were illegally killed in Africa between 2010 and 2012, about 33,630 each year.¹ The African forest elephant, in particular, has suffered a drastic decline in its population: in February 2014, scientists announced that 65% of forest elephants were poached between 2002 and 2013, leaving 95% of the forests of the Democratic Republic of Congo devoid of elephants.²

Thailand plays a key role in the global ivory trade as one of the major markets for ivory consumers, acting as both a transit point and destination for smuggled ivory. Current Thai law allows trading of ivory from domesticated Thai elephants, but the market is fuelled by illegal ivory smuggled from Africa. The Thai government took steps to regulate

and control ivory trading and possession by passing the new Elephant Ivory Act in 2015 and further demonstrated its dedication to ending the illegal trade by destroying over 2 tons of confiscated ivory in August last year.

While Thai people are not considered to be the main buyers of ivory products, the country's legal domestic trade has stimulated demand from tourists, especially those from mainland China and Hong Kong which perpetuates the poaching crisis in Africa. Illegal ivory is laundered, crafted into carvings, ornaments and jewelry, and sold in the market as legal domesticated ivory.

In July 2015, WildAid, African Wildlife Foundation and Save the Elephants conducted a poll by TNS Thailand to understand Thailand's ivory consumers, overall awareness of Africa's elephant poaching crisis and attitudes towards the ivory trade in Thailand.

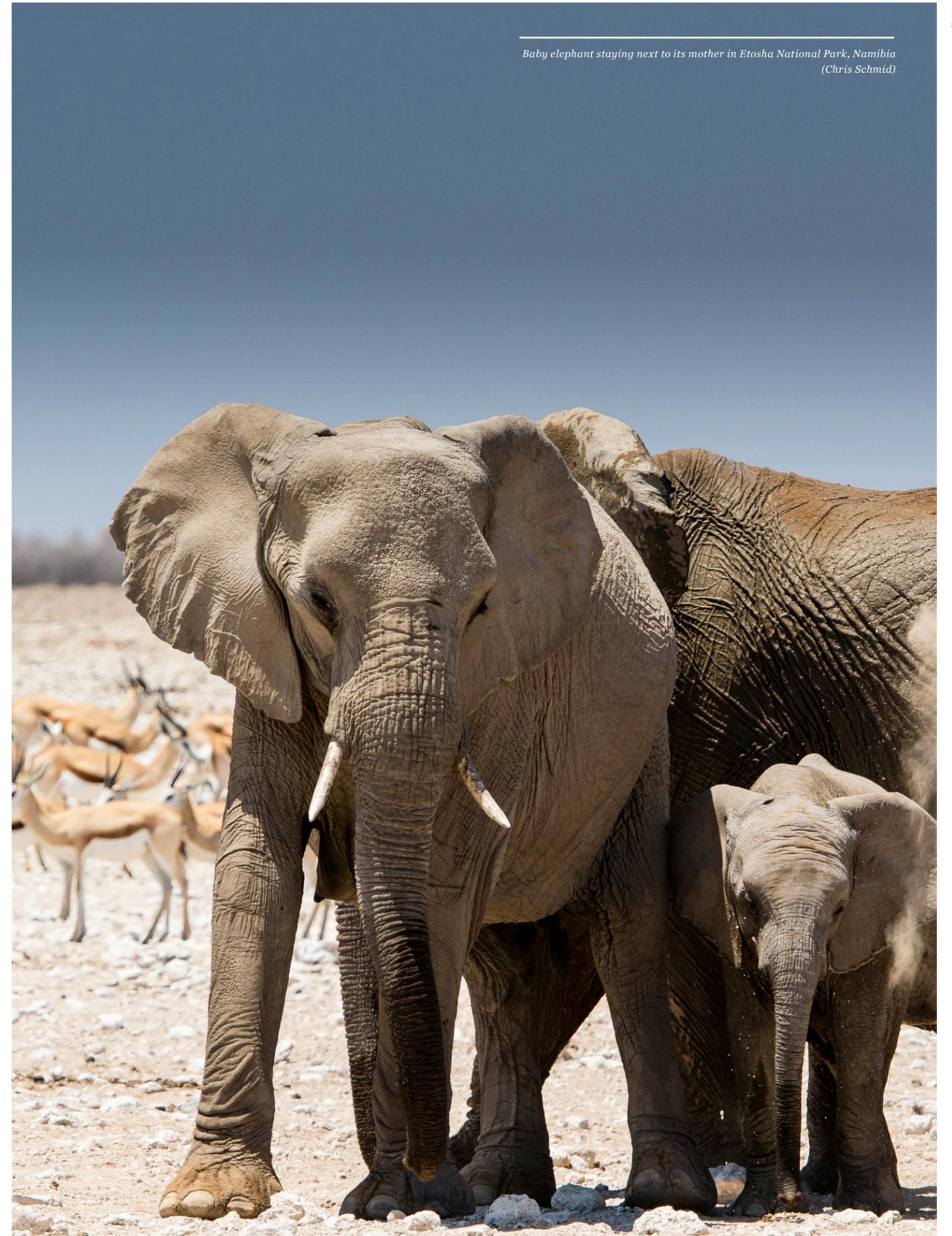
Survey results show less than half (45%) of Thai residents are

aware that Thailand's ivory trade is contributing to the poaching crisis in Africa. Almost half (49%) are unaware that Thailand is one of the main destinations for illegal African ivory and more than 60% do not know that ivory poaching is linked to terrorist groups and international organized crime.

An overwhelming majority of respondents (96%) say they are not likely to buy ivory products in the future and 93% pledge never to buy. Though 93% of Thais support reducing Thailand's ivory trade, just 42% support banning all ivory trading.

The survey underlines the potential for changing Thai attitudes and behavior by increasing awareness of the elephant poaching crisis in Africa and the link between Thailand's ivory trade and poaching, and highlights the need to educate the public about why regulating the existing domestic trade is not enough to stop illegal smuggling of ivory.

Baby elephant staying next to its mother in Etosha National Park, Namibia
(Chris Schmid)



1. Wittemyer, G., Northrup, J. M., Douglas-Hamilton, I., et al. "Illegal killing for ivory drives global decline in African elephants." Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 2014.
2. Maisels, F., Strindberg, S., et al. "Massive loss of forest elephants in Central Africa." WCS, 2014.

THREATS TO ELEPHANTS

Elephants are primarily poached for their ivory, which comes from the tusks of all African and male Asian elephants, and is used for carvings, ornaments, jewelry, trinkets, chopsticks and other crafts. While the use of ivory dates back hundreds of years, scientists believe ivory has been processed on an industrial scale in the last century to supply markets in the United States, Europe, and in recent decades, East Asia.

In 2007, African elephant populations were estimated to be 500,000-700,000, while the estimated Asian elephant population was 30,000-50,000.

In 1976, the African elephant was listed under Appendix II of the UN Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), designed to control and limit trade, while in 1975 the Asian elephant was listed on CITES Appendix I, prohibiting international trade. However, the CITES regulatory system was subject to wide-

spread abuse, and African elephant populations fell from more than 1.2 million to roughly 600,000 by 1989. During the 1980s, a decade referred to as the “Ivory Wars,” at least 700,000 elephants were slaughtered throughout Africa as legal trade enabled large-scale laundering of ivory from poached elephants.³

In response to this poaching epidemic, CITES banned the international elephant ivory trade in 1989, but domestic ivory sales continued to be legal in some countries. The international ban initially was a huge success: Ivory prices were drastically cut, almost eliminating markets in the U.S. and Europe. Poaching was greatly reduced, and elephant populations started to recover.

However, new markets emerged by 2008 as business ties between Asia and Africa increased. Economies grew rapidly in countries including China and created a new class of potential ivory consumers. Expanding markets have increased poaching dramatically

in West, Central and East Africa, and the impacts on elephant populations continue to steadily worsen. A study published in July 2014 found that more than 100,000 elephants were illegally killed in Africa between 2010 and 2012 – a staggering ~33,630 each year.⁴ The African forest elephant in particular has suffered a drastic decline in its population: In February 2014, scientists announced that 65% of forest elephants were poached between 2002 and 2013, leaving 95% of the forests of the Democratic Republic of Congo devoid of elephants.⁵

In addition, CITES allowed “one-off” sales of ivory from natural mortality, culls and seizures. The first one-off sale occurred in 1999, with ivory from Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe sold exclusively to Japan. In 2008, a second sale to Japan included South Africa’s stockpile and allowed China to purchase 62 tons of ivory.^{6,7}

3. Walsh, Bryan. “African Nations Move to ‘Downlist’ the Elephant.” Time Magazine Online, 2010.

4. Wittemyer, G., Northrup, J. M., Douglas-Hamilton, I., et al. “Illegal killing for ivory drives global decline in African elephants.” Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 2014.

5. Maisels, F., Strindberg, S., et al. “Massive loss of forest elephants in Central Africa.” WCS, 2014.

6. “Experts report highest elephant poaching and ivory smuggling rates in a decade.” www.traffic.org, 2012.

7. Gabriel, G. G., Hua, N., and Wang, J. “Making a Killing: A 2011 Survey of Ivory Markets in China.” International Fund for Animal Welfare, 2012.



An official checks for fingerprints and DNA on smuggled elephant tusks.
(Photo by Vichan Poti/Pacific Press/LightRocket via Getty Images)

IVORY TRADE IN THAILAND

Thailand's ivory market is known to be one of the largest and most thriving in the world as local law allows trading of ivory from domesticated Thai elephants. The market is also fuelled by illegal, "newly poached" ivory laundered from Africa: as a significant destination and transit point for this ivory, Thailand plays a role in facilitating Africa's current poaching crisis.

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) designated Thailand as one of the 8 "primary concern" countries that are most heavily implicated in the illegal ivory trade, and the country is thus required to develop a National Ivory Action Plan to strengthen controls of the ivory markets and help combat the illegal ivory trade.

In response to threats of international trade sanctions, Thailand submitted a revised National Ivory Action Plan in 2014. The following year, Thailand passed the Elephant Ivory Act as part

of the 5-point action plan aimed at regulating the legal ivory market (ivory sourced from domesticated Asian elephants). The new law requires ivory traders and ivory owners to register their stocks with authorities. Subsequently, over 220 tons of ivory has been registered.

The country also made an amendment to the existing Wild Animals Reservation and Protection Act, making African elephants a protected species in Thailand. The changes impose new penalties for illegal trade or possession of African elephant ivory of up to four years imprisonment.

Thailand made several major illegal ivory seizures last year: Since October 2015, Thai customs has made four seizures of ivory originating from Africa, totaling more than 800 kilograms. The latest seizure in April 2016 was more than 300 kilograms.

In August 2015, the Thai government destroyed over 2 tons of confiscated ivory – the country's first destruction

of this kind - to show its determination to crackdown on the illegal ivory trade.

CITES and international conservation groups recognize the considerable progress Thailand has made over the past year, but fear that it may not be enough. Hong Kong's history has shown that legal ivory sales only serve to provide a cover for illegal trade, despite the government's insistence that they have strict control mechanisms in place to regulate ivory sales. The report "Illusion of Control" released in September 2015 by WildAid, African Wildlife Foundation and Save The Elephants highlights how the legal ivory trade was used to launder massive amounts of illegal ivory. Ivory traders and buyers abused multiple loopholes in the Hong Kong government's permit system.

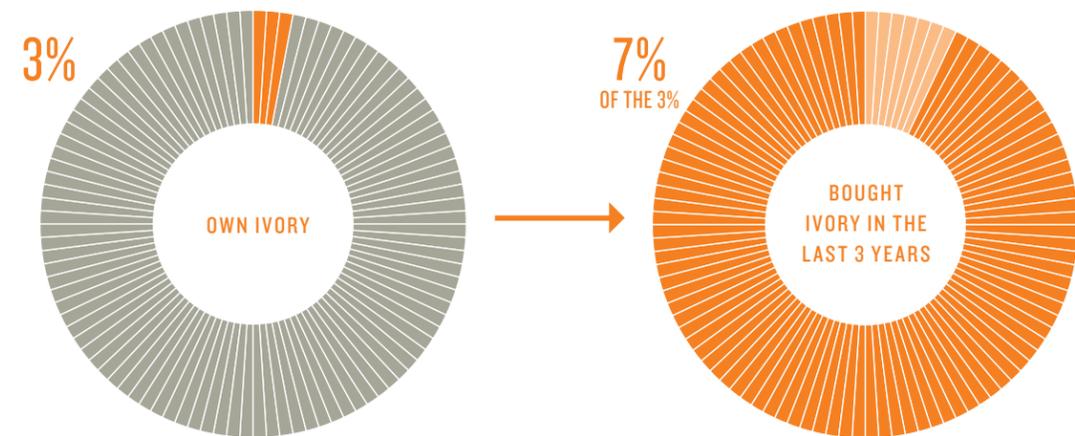
As China, the United States and Hong Kong recently pledged landmark commitments to phase out the ivory trade, we call on the Thai government to reconsider its stance to gradually ban all ivory trading in the country.

2015 THAILAND SURVEY

In August 2015, WildAid and its conservation partners African Wildlife Foundation and Save the Elephants commissioned a survey conducted by TNS Thailand of 1,000 Thai residents to better understand Thailand's ivory consumers, overall awareness of Africa's elephant poaching crisis and attitudes towards ivory trading in Thailand.

SURVEY KEY FINDINGS

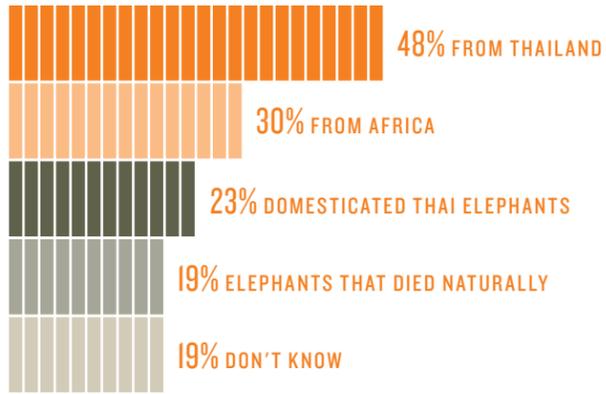
1. **Just 3% of the respondents reported owning ivory products.** Of those who own ivory, only 7% said they bought it in the last 3 years.



2. 96% of respondents said they do not intend to buy ivory products in the future.



3. 48% believe ivory sold in Thailand comes from wild elephants poached in Thailand while 30% think it comes from poached wild elephants in Africa. Some thought the ivory comes from domesticated Thai elephants (23%) or elephants that died naturally (19%), while 19% said they did not know.



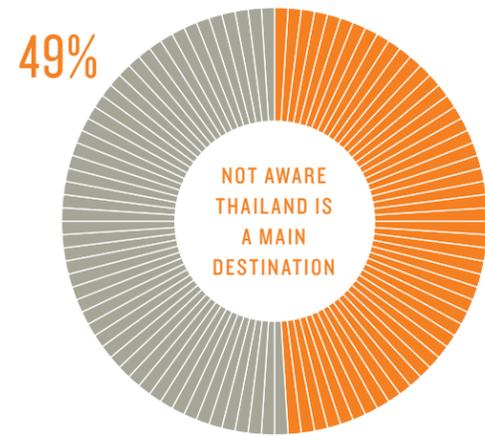
4. 60% of Thais believe ivory sold in the local market comes from illegal sources, while 37% said both illegal and legal channels.



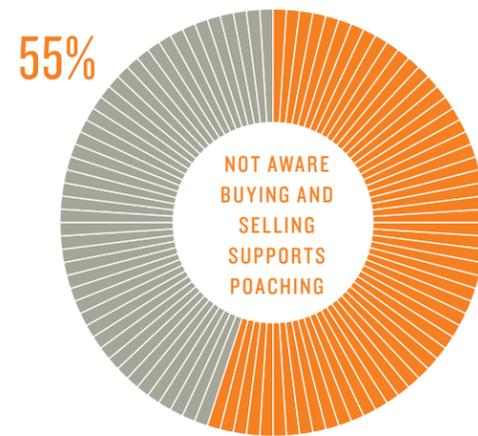
5. Just 52% of respondents are aware of the elephant poaching crisis in Africa, with a higher proportion (62-63%) among the 18-29 year old age group - compared to 41-44% for 30-59 year old age group.



6. 49% are not aware that Thailand is one of the main destinations for illegal ivory coming from Africa.



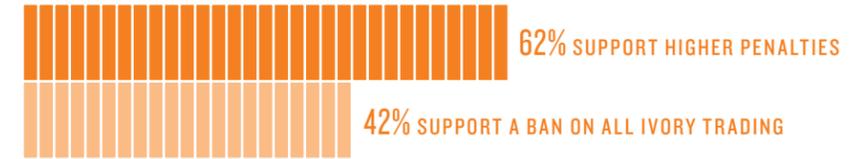
7. 55% of respondents are not aware that buying and selling ivory products in Thailand are supporting poaching crisis in Africa.



8. A significant 61% are not aware that poaching elephant for ivory in Africa is linked to terrorist trade and international organized crime.



9. To stop ivory smuggling, 62% support higher penalties for smugglers, while 42% support a ban on all ivory trading.



10. 93% support reducing the trade of ivory and ivory products in Thailand.



11. 93% of respondents pledge never to buy ivory or ivory products.



- 1. Sample Size: 1,000 respondents Thailand nationwide
- 2. Type: Face-to-Face interview
- 3. Age: 18 years and older
- 4. Income: Full range
- 5. Fieldwork period: June 29 - July 17, 2015
- 6. Weighted: Raw data was rim weighted based on 2014 figures from the Thailand Census and Statistics Department

African elephants, Amboseli National Park, Kenya (Poulomee Basu)



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