



CONSERVING ELEPHANTS IN THE TANZANIA-KENYA BORDERLANDS: FORGING A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

ARUSHA
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JUSTIFICATION

Cross-border collaboration is vital for conserving the large elephant population in Tanzania-Kenya borderlands and connecting the fragmented herds spread among the many national parks, reserves and community wildlife areas in the region.

The borderlands elephant population is the best studied and most famous in all Africa and a key attraction in the \$1.3 billion tourism industry of Tanzania and Kenya.

Heavy poaching for ivory in the 1970s and 1980s reduced the elephant population in the borderlands from some 50,000 to fewer than 15,000 by 1989. The large connected herds that traversed the border and rift valley were fragmented and largely confined to parks by heavy poaching. The concentrated herds have had a large impact on the habitats of many parks. Following the international ivory ban of 1989, elephant numbers began to recover and spread out from the parks once more.

In recent years a sharp rise in poaching and deepening conflict with people has slowed elephant recovery and blocked range expansion. Most of the poaching and all of the conflict takes place when elephants spread onto community lands around parks. The Tanzania and Kenya's national elephant plans recognize that recovery of elephant population and their viability in parks depends on an expanded range and population connections among fragmented herds. Expanding elephant ranges beyond parks depends on access to suitable community lands, protection from poachers, containing conflict with people and, above all, ensuring that communities benefit from wildlife and have the conservation and management skills to do so.

The scale and scope of conserving a viable elephant population in the Tanzania-Kenya borderlands calls for a close collaboration between the two countries and among government agencies, local communities and non-government organizations operating in the region. The Liz Claiborne Art Ortenberg Foundation is sponsoring a meeting to foster such cooperation.

GOALS

The overall goal of the meeting is to bring together community representatives, conservation organizations and government agencies in the Kenya-Tanzania borderland concerned with elephant conservation with the following aims in mind:

- Assess the status and movements of elephant populations in the borderlands region.
- Identify pathways needed to establish a viable interconnected elephant population.
- Strengthen community conservation capacity in critical pathways, aimed at safeguarding elephants, reducing conflict and increasing local benefits.
- Identify how government agencies, conservation organizations and communities can work collaboratively towards these ends.