

500 elephants killed in Cameroon park in 2 months

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"As of today we estimate that 480 [elephants](#) have been slaughtered in our park," said Mathieu Fometa of the Bouba Ndjida National Park in northern Cameroon, near the border with Chad, where the animals roam freely.

"Formally, we did count 458 [carcasses](#)," he said, but he cautioned that "these figures may be an underestimate because the park covers 220,000

hectares (540,000 acres) and it isn't easy to travel to get accurate information."

On Thursday an AFP reporter saw 12 elephant carcasses at three sites in the park, some of them having been shot Tuesday according to sources.

Between Sunday and Tuesday "our teams counted at least 20 elephants killed" in those three days, said Fometa, who added that the killers were still in the park, having said in January they would stay for three months.

The government has taken no visible steps to secure the park.

The killers are "dozens of Sudanese and Chadian [poachers](#) armed with machine guns and operating in [gangs](#) on horseback," said International Fund for Animal Welfare official Celine Sissler-Bienvenu on the IFAW website.

"Nothing seems to be able to stop their reckless pursuit of ivory that began in mid-November in the [Central African Republic](#), carried on in Chad in December, and ended in Cameroon in January."

Poaching in Cameroon wildlife parks has been on the rise in recent months, sources say, with the ivory mainly bound for Asia.

The IFAW said earlier that many orphaned elephant [calves](#) had been spotted abandoned following the shootings and concerns were high the babies may soon die of hunger and thirst.

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