

# Experts to probe deaths of 64 elephants in Zimbabwe park

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An African elephant is pictured on November 19, 2012, in Hwange National Park in Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwean wildlife authorities will dispatch a team of experts to the country's largest game park Saturday to investigate the poisoning deaths of 64 elephants, an official said.

"Experts drawn from seven ministries will travel to Hwange National

Park tomorrow (Saturday) to make findings on the disaster at the park where 64 elephants have died from [cyanide poisoning](#)," the director general of the parks and wildlife authority, Edson Chidziya, said.

"There are fears that there could be more deaths but we need chemists to determine whether the danger is still there."

The elephants reportedly died in separate incidents after drinking poisoned water. The state-owned Herald newspaper gave the number of elephants killed as 69.

Nine people were arrested on suspicion of poisoning watering halls in the game park to kill the elephants for their [tusks](#) and were due to appear in court in Tsholotsho.

Chidziya dismissed reports linking the [poachers](#) to a South African businessman.

"We just heard about those reports but from our side we don't know about that link yet," he said.

Two years ago nine elephants, five lions and two buffalo died from cyanide poisoning in Hwange national park.

Environment minister Saviour Kasukuwere has called for stiff penalties for poachers.

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