

Poachers slay six elephants in Kenya

April 26 2014



Photo taken on March 20, 2012, shows elephants foraging at the Tsavo-east National park, Kenya

Poachers have slain six elephants including four calves in a private reserve in Kenya, wildlife officials said Saturday, as the country battles an upsurge in the illegal slaughter of elephants and rhinos.

"Six [elephants](#) have been confirmed poached and two, female adults, tusks chopped off. Four others were all tuskless juvenile," the Kenya

Wildlife Service (KWS) said in a statement.

"All carcasses had gunshot wounds," said the state-run agency in charge of guarding Kenya's world-famous national parks, adding that rangers were hunting for those responsible.

The animals were poached in a southwestern reserve on the edge of the Tsavo national park, the country's main elephant sanctuary and home to some 11,000 of the pachyderms.

Since the start of the year, 65 elephants have been lost to poaching in Kenya according to figures from the KWS, which recorded 302 slayings for the whole of 2013.

The wildlife service estimates Kenya's [elephant population](#) at 38,000 nationwide, and the number of rhinos at just over 1,000.

The KWS has been battling accusations that poaching ringleaders have been allowed to act with impunity, with five of its officials suspended this month as part of a probe into alleged mismanagement.



Kenya Wildlife Services (KWS) chairman speaks during a press conference on March 25, 2014, at the KWS headquarters in Nairobi

The purge came weeks after a charge by wildlife activists that the service was losing the fight against the booming elephant ivory and rhino horn trade, dubbed a "national disaster".

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Citation: Poachers slay six elephants in Kenya (2014, April 26) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2014-04-poachers-elephants-kenya.html>

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