

Botswana warns over elephant deaths ahead of anti-poaching summit

March 10 2015



A pile of 15 tonnes of elephant ivory seized in Kenya is displayed at Nairobi National Park on March 3, 2015

Botswana warned Tuesday that elephants were being killed at an "unsustainably high" rate as it prepared to host conferences on poaching of the animals later this month.

"Although the statistics from 2013 and 2014 show a levelling off of

poached animals, the numbers are still unsustainably high and if maintained could result in [elephants](#) becoming extinct in much of their range," said environment, [wildlife](#) and tourism minister Tshekedi Khama.

Ivory poaching has been driven by demand in Asian markets, particularly China.

"The number of elephants killed exceeds the ability of the animals to reproduce, leading to concerns that populations are in decline," Khama said.

Botswana is hosting two major wildlife conferences: the African Elephant Meeting on March 23 and the Kasane Conference on the Illegal Wildlife Trade two days later.

According to the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS), over 100,000 of the pachyderms were killed across the continent by poachers between 2010 and 2013.

The southern African country itself is home to about 200,000 elephants.

Over 30 heads of state are expected for the talks, where they will review their progress since the first African Elephant Summit in December 2013.

Last month, Beijing imposed a one-year ban on ivory imports, a move wildlife campaigners have criticised as merely symbolic.

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