

# Drought-hit Zimbabwe to transfer thousands of animals

November 11 2019

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Threatened: Hundreds of elephants are to move home in the biggest wildlife transfer in Zimbabwe's history

Zimbabwe's wildlife agency said Monday it would move hundreds of elephants and other animals in a dramatic bid to save them from a lethal

drought.

At least 120 [elephants](#) have already died over the past two months as the country grapples with one of the worst droughts in its history.

"We are moving 600 elephants, two prides of lion comprising between five and 10 members, a pack of wild dogs, 50 buffalo, 40 giraffes and 2,000 impalas," parks and wildlife authority spokesman Tinashe Farawo told AFP.

The animals will be moved from Save Conservancy, a major park in southeastern Zimbabwe, to three other game reserves.

"This will be the biggest translocation in our history," said Farawo.

Permits for the operation have already been secured, Farawo said.

The transfer will start "during the rain season, when pastures and foliage start flourishing," he added. The rain season usually kicks off from around the middle of November.

"We want to avoid a situation where we trans-locate animals, only for them to starve to death because there is no [food](#) in their new habitat," he explained.

The relocation was announced after the death of dozens of elephants in Hwange, Zimbabwe's biggest game reserve, located in the northwest of the country.

Hungry elephants have been breaking out of wildlife areas and raiding [human settlements](#) in search for food, posing a threat to communities.

Farawo said 200 people have died in "human-and-animal conflict" over

the past five years.

Several southern African countries are in the grip of one of the worst droughts in decades, caused by months of above-[average temperatures](#) and erratic rainfall.

This year's [drought](#) has wilted grasslands and dried up water holes, making it increasingly difficult for [animals](#) to survive.

Botswana last month announced that more than 100 elephants had died in two months in its famed Chobe National Park.

The drought has left more than five million rural Zimbabweans—nearly a third of the population—at risk of food shortages before the next harvest in 2020, the UN has warned.

Food shortages for people have been amplified by the combined effects of drought and the country's enduring economic crisis.

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