

Zimbabwe says 200 elephants have now died amid drought

November 12 2019, by Farai Mutsaka



In this photo taken Sunday Nov. 10, 2019, a dead elephant lays in the Hwange National Park, Zimbabwe. More than 200 elephants have died amid a severe drought, Zimbabwe's parks agency said Tuesday Nov. 12, and a mass relocation of animals is planned to ease congestion. (AP Photo)

More than 200 elephants have died amid a severe drought, Zimbabwe's

parks agency said on Tuesday, and a mass relocation of animals is planned to ease congestion.

Zimbabwe National Parks and Wildlife Management Authority spokesman Tinashe Farawo said at least 200 [elephants](#) have died in vast Hwange National Park alone since October and other parks are affected.

Animals including giraffe, buffalo and impala are also dying, he said, and the situation can improve only after rains return.

"Almost every animal is being affected," he said. "Of course, elephants are easily noticed during patrols or game drives, but some [bird species](#) are seriously affected because they can only breed in certain tree heights and those trees are being knocked down by elephants."

Many animals are straying from Zimbabwe's parks into nearby communities in search of food and water. The parks agency has said 33 people have died from conflict with animals this year alone.

The agency said it plans to move 600 elephants, two prides of lions and other animals from the Save Valley Conservancy in the southeast to less congested parks. A pack of wild dogs, 50 buffalo, 40 giraffe and 2,000 impalas also will be relocated, Farawo said.



In this photo taken Sunday Nov. 10, 2019, a dead elephant lays in the Hwange National Park, Zimbabwe. More than 200 elephants have died amid a severe drought, Zimbabwe's parks agency said Tuesday Nov. 12, and a mass relocation of animals is planned to ease congestion. (AP Photo)

The animals "have exceeded their ecological carrying capacity," he said. "If the populations go unchecked, the animals will threaten the very ecosystem they depend on for survival."

Zimbabwe has an estimated 85,000 elephants, second only to neighboring Botswana with more than 130,000.



In this photo taken Sunday Nov. 10, 2019, a herd of elephants make their way through the Hwange National Park, Zimbabwe, in search of water. More than 200 elephants have died amid a severe drought, Zimbabwe's parks agency said Tuesday Nov. 12, and a mass relocation of animals is planned to ease congestion. (AP Photo)

Zimbabwe says it is struggling to cope with booming numbers of wild elephants and wants to be allowed to sell its ivory stockpile and export live elephants to raise money for conservation and ease congestion in the drought-affected parks.

The country exported 101 elephants between 2016 and this year, mainly to China and the United Arab Emirates, raising more than \$3 million for [conservation efforts](#), according to the parks agency.

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