

Water shortage drives elephant migration from Zimbabwe

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Elephants on the move at Zimbabwe's Hwange National Park, in May 2022.

Large numbers of elephants from Zimbabwe's biggest national park are moving to neighboring Botswana in a search for water, a spokesman said Monday.

"Many animals have and are moving from Hwange National Park into Botswana" Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority spokesman Tinashe Farawo told AFP.

Hwange National Park covers an area of more than 14,600 square kilometers (5,600 square miles) and is home to about 50,000 elephants.

"Water bodies have dried up and the animals are in search for water and food," the spokesman said, adding that buffaloes and "all types of animals present in the park" were also migrating in scores.

"I can't quantify how many elephants have moved whether its hundreds or thousands but it has been a lot," he said of the migration which began in August.

"The amount of animals migrating has definitely increased over the years due to the increase in [water shortages](#)," Farawo added.

The authority said wildlife migration between Hwange National Park to Botswana is not uncommon, however this year it had come "too early", citing climate change.

The mass movement of wild animals could lead to an increase in conflict between humans and wildlife as they pass through populated areas in Zimbabwe.

"It means more animals are going to invade communities, people competing for water with [animals](#)," Farawo warned.

Conflict between humans and wildlife is a significant problem in remote parts of Zimbabwe, caused in part by [population growth](#).

Elephants killed at least 60 people last year, according to government

figures.

Zimbabwe has around 100,000 elephants, the second largest population in the world and almost double the capacity of its parks, conservationists say.

Botswana is home to around 130,000, the world's largest elephant population.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has classified southern Africa as a region at risk, facing increased risks of extreme heat and reduced rainfall due to global warming.

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