

French customs announce major ivory haul

December 16 2013



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Customs officials discovered two whole elephant [tusks](#) and several chunks of tusks worth around 80,000 euros (\$110,000) in the car near

the western city of Poitiers on December 10, they said in a statement.

They added it was "one of the biggest seizures of ivory by French customs over the past ten years."

There are an estimated 500,000 elephants in Africa, where poaching is prevalent and kills around 22,000 to 25,000 animals every year, meaning that they are being eliminated faster than they can reproduce.

As a result, [ivory trade](#) is strictly monitored and vendors can only sell it if they have certificates proving that they obtained it in a legal manner, for example by taking tusks off elephants that were already dead.

But the French [customs](#) said the person who was driving the car did not have a valid certificate for the two whole tusks and had no documents for the other chunks of ivory.

France earlier this month announced it would increase fines for illegal trading in ivory and endangered [animal species](#), as part of a major Africa summit that took place in Paris.

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