

EMBARGOED UNTIL:

August 31, 2016, at 2000 BST; 1500 EDT; 1200 PDT; 0900 HST



The Great Elephant Census | A Paul G. Allen Project Census Results Summary

Overview

Paul Allen's [Great Elephant Census](#) (GEC), the first-ever pan-African survey of savanna elephants, confirms massive population declines. Final results show:

- Savanna elephant populations **declined by 30 percent** (equal to 144,000 elephants) between 2007 and 2014.¹
- The current rate of decline is **8 percent per year, primarily due to poaching**. The rate of decline accelerated from 2007 to 2014.
- In the 18 countries surveyed, 352,271 elephants were counted. This figure represents at least 93 percent of savanna elephants in these countries.
- Eighty-four percent of the population surveyed was sighted in legally protected areas while 16 percent was in unprotected areas. However, high numbers of elephant carcasses were discovered in many protected areas, indicating that elephants are struggling both inside and outside parks.

By counting over 93 percent of savanna elephant populations in 18 countries across 463,000 kilometers of savanna, the GEC provides urgently needed data on the size and distribution of elephant savanna populations in the wild – information that is critical to future conservation efforts and to elephants' very survival.

The GEC is a global, collaborative effort. In addition to principal investigator Mike Chase of [Elephants Without Borders](#), wildlife department staff of the 18 countries, more than 90 scientists — including a technical advisory group — six NGOs and dozens of conservationists on the ground have made this undertaking possible. Launching the Census in 2013, philanthropist Paul G. Allen and lead partner organization [Elephants Without Borders](#) invested in a data-driven solution to save the African elephant. The Census accurately determines the number and distribution of African savanna elephants over the great majority of their range and provides a baseline on a continental scale for future surveys and trend analyses to protect elephant populations for the long term.

Country-by-Country Summary

Of note, Angola's, Mozambique's and Tanzania's elephants experienced staggering population declines, which were much greater than previously known and expected. Surprising and devastatingly low numbers of elephants were found in northeastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, northern Cameroon and southwest Zambia. In fact, populations in all these places face local extinction. In contrast, South Africa, Botswana, Uganda, parts of Kenya, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi, and the W-Arli-Pendjari conservation complex of protected areas that span Benin, Niger and Burkina Faso were found to have stable or slightly increasing elephant populations. This result was particularly surprising for the W-Arli-Pendjari area, which is the only large elephant population left in West Africa. The area merits greater conservation attention and investment to protect the elephants that remain.

¹ For the large populations sampled by the GEC in 15 of 18 countries flown and for which a comparable previous count was available.



EMBARGOED UNTIL:

August 31, 2016, at 2000 BST; 1500 EDT; 1200 PDT; 0900 HST

Program Quick Facts

- The GEC is the first-ever pan-African survey of savanna elephants.
- **463,000 km** flown by survey planes – equal to flying to the moon and a quarter of the way home. Teams flew a total of 294,517 km of transect lines to sample 218,238 km² or 24 percent of the total ecosystem area of 893,961 km².
- **9,700 hours** (406 days) were spent in the air with an average flight time of nearly three hours.
- **81 airplanes** and **286 crew members** completed the surveys.
- **18 national government partners**, whose permission, support and hard work made the census possible
- **90 scientists, six NGO partners** and **two advisory partners** collaborated on GEC:
 - [Elephants Without Borders](#) (Mike Chase, principal investigator)
 - [African Parks](#)
 - [Frankfurt Zoological Society](#)
 - [Wildlife Conservation Society](#)
 - [The Nature Conservancy](#)
 - Kevin Dunham
 - [Save the Elephants](#) (advisory partner)
 - [IUCN/SSC African Elephant Specialist Group](#) (advisory partner)
- The GEC was launched at the end of 2013, and the first flight commenced in February 2014 over the [Tsavo National Park](#) in Kenya.
- Paul G. Allen committed \$7 million to the census.
- Paul G. Allen's Vulcan Inc. dedicated eight full- and part-time staff members to manage the project and develop its database and standardizing technology.
- The Census has completed 18 country surveys with two countries still to be completed. South Sudan and the Central African Republic are anticipated to be flown by the end of 2016, depending on conditions impacting safety and data reliability.

###