

Last Updated Wednesday 01 August 2018, 12:55 pm.

[Advertising](#) [Contact Us](#)

Home News Business Features Editorial Opinion & Analysis World Lifestyle Sport Selefu Naledi

Mmegi Features How many elephants are there in Botswana?

How many elephants are there in Botswana?

Last month when Maun East MP Kostantinos Markus tabled a motion requesting government to consider lifting the ban on the hunting and shooting of elephants in the areas that are not designated as game reserves and national parks, he put the number of elephants to be "approximately 237, 000".



By [THALEFANG CHARLES](#)

Fri 27 Jul 2018, 13:08 pm (GMT +2)

Like 182

Tweet

0 Comments

Email

Share



: Botswana Elephant Census Team, Mike Chase, Robert Sutcliffe, Elford Seonyatseng and Tammi McAllister. PIC: THALEFANG CHARLES

Markus credited his estimates to Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP) surveys.

"The figure ranges from the area of 270, 000 to 300, 000. There are too many elephants in this country," reported the Leader of Alliance for Progressives and MP for Gaborone South Ndaba Gaolathe. Surprisingly, one of the elephant ecology experts who contributed to Mmegi's ongoing hunting ban debate Dr. Mike Chase of Elephants Without Borders (EWB) put the figure at 130, 000 - far less than half of the numbers that was quoted in Botswana Parliament.

In 2011 Chase led the first-ever pan-African survey of savanna elephants in Great Elephant Census (GEC) project funded by billionaire philanthropist Paul G. Allen.

Features

Fri 27 Jul 2018, 13:10 pm
[SA holds key in billion pula BCL battle](#)

Fri 27 Jul 2018, 13:08 pm
[How many elephants are there in Botswana?](#)

Fri 20 Jul 2018, 14:40 pm
[Day of reckoning arrives for Namibian refugees](#)

Fri 20 Jul 2018, 14:38 pm
[How the Namibian refugees came to be in Botswana](#)

Fri 13 Jul 2018, 14:26 pm
[Letter to Seretse: Masi 100 days](#)

Fri 13 Jul 2018, 14:24 pm
[Behind the news, Molepolole triple murder](#)

Fri 06 Jul 2018, 13:26 pm
[Bakers eat the bread of sorrows](#)

Fri 29 Jun 2018, 15:31 pm
[No more space left for Botswana's giants](#)

Fri 29 Jun 2018, 15:29 pm
[Tackling the elephant in the room](#)

Fri 29 Jun 2018, 14:32 pm
[Making a case to permit the legal trade in rhino horn](#)

Fri 22 Jun 2018, 13:30 pm
[FCC's worst feeding scandal](#)

Fri 22 Jun 2018, 13:04 pm
[Remembering soul sister, Beata Kasale](#)

Fri 22 Jun 2018, 13:01 pm
[Reluctant returnees: Caprivians face the long way home](#)

Fri 22 Jun 2018, 13:00 pm
[Thank you Ausi B! Thank you my anchor](#)

Fri 22 Jun 2018, 12:55 pm
[Beata Kasale joins the Realm of Equals](#)

Fri 15 Jun 2018, 13:09 pm
[Movers and shakers of Francistown politics](#)

Your Name

Your Phone Number

Interested Product

Car Insurance

Get Free Quote

[Terms & Conditions](#)

EXCHANGE RATES

FOREIGN EXCHANGE: Wednesday, 17 Jan 2018

FOREIGN / PULA	PULA / FOREIGN
1 USD = Pula 9.7656	1 Pula = USD 0.1024
1 GBP = Pula 13.4590	1 Pula = GBP 0.0743
1 EUR = Pula 11.9617	1 Pula = EUR 0.0836
1 YEN = Pula 0.0882	1 Pula = YEN 11.34
1 ZAR = Pula 0.7938	1 Pula = ZAR 1.2597

[SUBSCRIBE TO OUR NEWSLETTER](#)





Mmegi.

The final results from Great Elephant Census, released on August 31 in 2014 showed that there are 352,271 African savanna elephants in 18 countries, and they are down by 30% in seven years.

At present, various local and international commentators contributing in the elephant hunting ban debate are only quoting numbers that suit their argument. But they all agree that Botswana has the largest population of African elephants on the continent.

Some commentators are saying that the 2014 elephant hunting ban must have led to the more migration of elephants from neighbouring countries seeking refuge from the hunting areas. So exactly how many elephants have migrated into the country and what is the total population at the moment?

New elephant survey

Coincidentally the numbers question comes days after EWB in collaboration with government through the DWNP are set on Botswana elephant census 2018. Under the leadership of Mike Chase, the aerial survey hopes to settle the numbers' confusion and help legislators to draw management policies based on credible findings.

This is by far the elephants' survey with the "highest sampling intensity ever conducted in the country," said Chase at the EWB Conservation Ecology Research Station at Abu in the Okavango Delta.

Chase, who is the founder of EWB and first Motswana to receive elephant ecology doctorate, says until there is a new technology that could survey elephants, aerial surveys are the best way to count the elephants especially in remote and difficult terrains.

"Aerial surveys provide vital information on their status, seasonal distribution and abundance. They improve our understanding of wildlife populations, which allows us to base our conservation action on solid scientific understanding and guide future research and monitoring, with an emphasis on evaluating the effectiveness of management policies," he said.

The field research team includes Chase as the principal investigator, Elford Seonyatseng, the senior wildlife warden with DWNP, Robert Sutcliffe, EWB assistant manager and the pilot Tammi McAllister.

The field researchers

use the EWB branded Cessna 206 airplane. The team spends five hours flying, from the morning to about midday, along set transects in each particular area.

In the small airplane it is always the boss Chase (he jokingly refers the airplane as torture chamber), pilot McAllister with her bountiful energy (she disagrees with Chase calling her bird 'torture chamber') behind them are observers Seonyatseng and Sutcliffe who call out and take pictures of the animals and baobab trees they see on a prescribed distance from their flight.

The observers use cameras mounted on each side of the plane to take high-resolution digital photographs that would be used to verify the numbers of animals seen to those captured in the photos. This photo interpretation is especially helpful in counting large herds that are difficult to count from the air.

Chase does the data input of all the calls from Seonyatseng and Sutcliffe. Even though the survey is mainly on elephants they are also collecting data of other animals, trees, mainly baobabs, and wildfires.

At the end of each day when they get off the airplane and get ferried to the EWB Conservation Ecology Research Station, the researchers always find best cooked lunch prepared by the station cook Gagoope Tsukotsuko.

Chase reported that they started the research on the expected low density areas outside periphery of the Okavango Delta. They have already surveyed the Ngamiland western and northern

Fri 08 Jun 2018, 15:54 pm

Coal's good old days return

Fri 01 Jun 2018, 13:22 pm

Is Lisima Lwa Mwono the lifeline to Okavango Delta?

Fri 25 May 2018, 14:22 pm

BDP has only itself to blame

Fri 25 May 2018, 14:21 pm

New Cllr, Kethoiwe wins cancer battle

Fri 25 May 2018, 14:20 pm

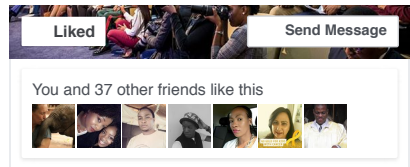
Kethoiwe's political journey

Fri 25 May 2018, 14:09 pm

Remembering Dr Philip Nchipi Tabane

Fri 25 May 2018, 06:00 am

Botswana tightens legal loopholes to plug illicit financial flows



HAVE A STORY? SEND US A TIP

Message...

*Anti-spam (case sensitive)





Antarctica Cruise Holiday

Antarctica expedition cruise - The ultimate Antarctica adventure - 14 days from £4,680
Responsible Travel





In the first two weeks of the survey the researchers discovered an alarming numbers of poached elephants. "In the first 10 days we discovered 51 fresh carcasses of poached elephants," said Chase.

He added that the number of carcasses discovered in two weeks is already approaching the number of half carcasses seen on the entire 2014 survey for all of northern Botswana.

A large number of these elephants killed with missing tusks was discovered in the areas called NG11 and NG12 on the north of the Okavango Delta. This is mainly a quiet area between the border with Namibia and the villages along the Okavango spillway from Seronga to Gudigwa.

In all their discoveries, Chase always notifies the respective authorities like the BDF anti-poaching wing.

The surveys are expected to complete in October this year where they would then start working on the data they collected. "We would then take our findings for peer review with other biologists and partners working on elephant ecology. We cannot release our findings without passing through peer review because as the population of elephants is a controversial subject at the moment, we have to make sure that the results pass all scientific scrutiny before being made public," said Chase.

If everything goes to plan, the results are expected to be published early next year after intensive data analysis.


So the big numbers question and debate of exactly how many elephants are here in Botswana would only be settled early in 2019, hopefully.

SUBSCRIBE TO OUR NEWSLETTER

Name *

Email*

SEND

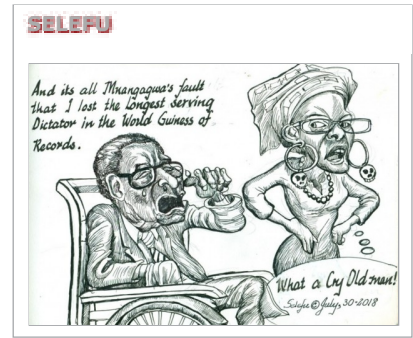


Masa Centre

FRIDAY 27 JUL - THURSDAY 02 AUG

Mission: Impossible - Skurraner

WITH V.I.P. TICKETS



Ads by REVERBNATION

DUSTIN WUTSCHKE

Listen Free Now

NEW SONG "SLOW DOWN (FT. ZARA TAYLOR)"

Like 182 Tweet 0 Comments Email Share



Is Jesus Really God?
Y-Jesus



IMAGEMAKERS
office now in
BOTSWANA!

0 Comments

Sort by Oldest

Add a comment...

Facebook Comments Plugin

