



TRAINED: A total of 39 rangers were recently trained at the Southern African Wildlife College: Photo: Contributed

EMPOWERING DATA-DRIVEN RANGERS

Reliable data allows for informed decision-making, effective conservation measures

Accurate and consistent data on elephant deaths is crucial for understanding and effectively addressing the threats faced by 'nature's gardeners'.

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Rangers from across the southern African region, including Namibia, have established a new community of practice for monitoring and reporting on elephant mortality.

Accurate and consistent data on elephant deaths is crucial for understanding and effectively addressing the threats faced by 'nature's gardeners', which include human-elephant conflict, habitat loss and the illegal killing for ivory.

Reliable data allows for informed decision-making and effective conservation measures to ensure the long-term survival of African elephants in their natural habitats.

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora's (CITES) Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) programme, in partnership with the Southern African Wildlife College (SAWC), successfully delivered a training session for 39 rangers at the SAWC campus, located in the Greater Kruger National Park in South Africa.

Participating countries included Namibia, South Africa, Angola, Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe, which have been successful in their conservation of elephants and together are home to the largest and healthiest populations of African elephants.

Shared knowledge

“This partnership highlights the importance of regional cooperation and shared knowledge in tackling the challenges faced by conservationists. Beyond imparting knowledge and skills, the CITES MIKE programme builds capacity for accurate data collection, thus providing evidence-based strategies for the conservation of elephants and increasing their resilience against the various threats to biodiversity,” CITES secretary-general Ivonne Higuero said.

Participants were trained on the MIKE programme's framework, data-collection techniques and documentation processes, ensuring consistency and accuracy in monitoring efforts across different sites.

The training of trainers approach aimed to further empower these officials to share their knowledge and train more personnel within their home countries, amplifying the impact of the training programme across borders.

This training marks the conclusion of a three-year partnership between the CITES MIKE programme and SAWC, with the goal of fostering collaboration and enhancing data-driven conservation efforts in the southern African region's elephant range states.

Since 2022, the MIKE programme has trained more than 100 wildlife conservation officials from across the region.

With the support of generous funding provided by the European Union, this initiative forms part of the MIKE project, which builds on successful previous CITES projects implemented in African elephant range states.

MIKE supports activities to strengthen the capacity of wildlife law enforcement agencies at national level and in focal sites to reduce the impacts of poaching and illegal wildlife trade.