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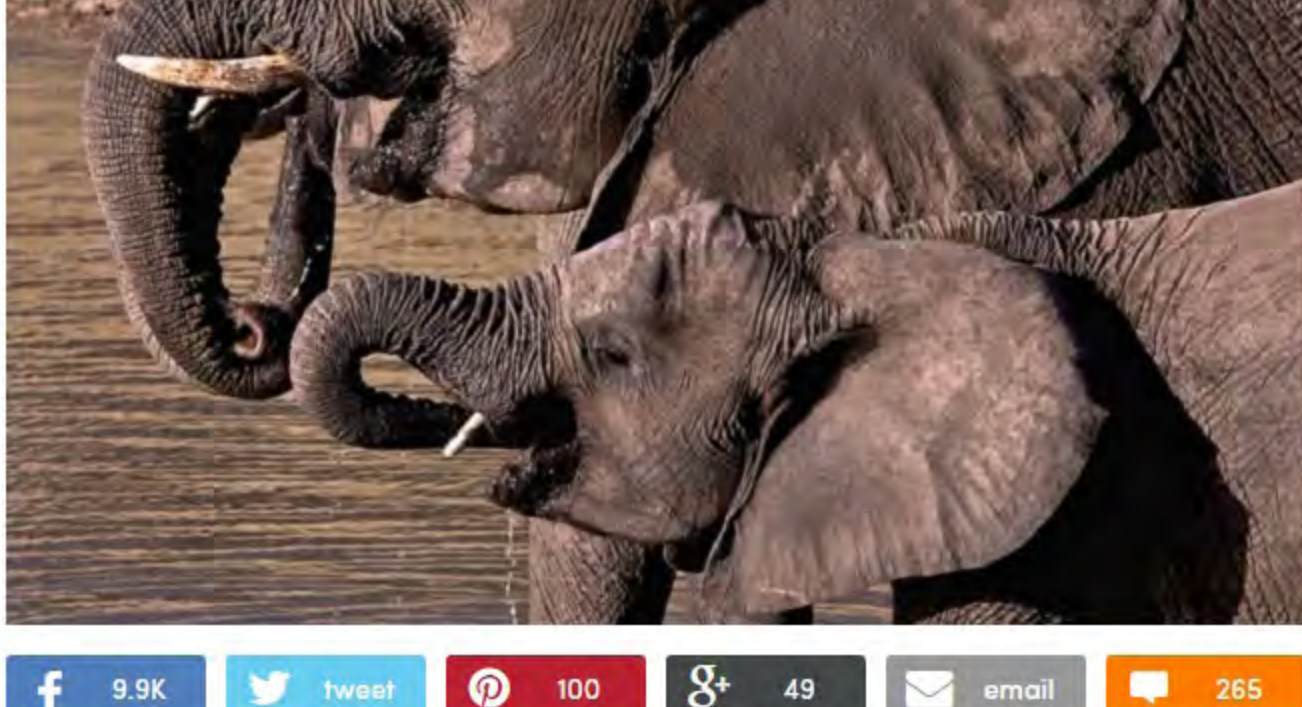
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Success! China Announces End to Ivory Trade in 2017



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By: [Laura Goldman](#) | January 3, 2017
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In an announcement that could prove to be extremely good news for elephants in the wild, the Chinese government has promised to end its domestic ivory market by the end of this year.

Every year, thousands of elephants are killed for their tusks by poachers. Between 2011 and 2014, more than 100,000 elephants were slaughtered. The African elephant population dropped 30 percent from 2007 to 2014. More elephants are being killed than are being born.

A 1989 international ban on the ivory trade has done little to stop the poaching. Why not? Because it doesn't apply to ivory taken from elephants before the ban was implemented. Poachers can easily lie by saying that the ivory is not new.

While other countries, including the United States and Hong Kong, have already taken stronger measures to end the ivory trade, China has been a holdout until now.

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China's announcement is especially significant because it is the largest market for ivory in the world. At least 50 to 70 percent of smuggled ivory ends up there, the New York Times reports.

"Almost all the ivory is for carving," John Robinson, with the Wildlife Conservation Society, told NPR. "China has had a history of doing so. Whole tusks are carved into elaborately assembled pieces of one kind or another."

In its Dec. 30 announcement, China's Office of the State Council said the shutdown, "to combat illegal trade in ivory," will occur in stages. It will start by phasing out legal ivory processing factories and sellers before March 31. The legal commercial ivory trade is to end completely by December 31.

Although China did officially ban the import of ivory last March, since the country still has a legal domestic market for it, ivory continues to be smuggled into the country, mainly by criminal syndicates.

'Game Changer for Elephant Conservation'

Many wildlife conservation groups are encouraged by China's announcement. It's "a potential game changer for elephant conservation," stated Carter Roberts, president and CEO of the World Wildlife Fund. He said the ivory trade is now facing its "twilight years" and the U.S. and China bans "will reverberate around the world."

Elly Pepper, with the NRDC (Natural Resources Defense Council), is also optimistic. She told the New York Times that China's announcement "may be the biggest sign of hope for elephants since the current poaching crisis began."

Save the Elephants founder Iain Douglas-Hamilton agreed, telling the Times that China "is moving from being the main problem to the main solution." He called the announcement "the most astonishing and wonderful piece of news."

For many years, these and other wildlife advocates have been urging China to end its ivory trade. More than 177,000 Care2 members have signed three petitions calling for a ban.

An end to China's ivory trade was finally set in motion in September 2015, when President Xi Jinping and President Obama agreed that both of their countries would combat wildlife trafficking by taking "significant and timely steps to halt the domestic commercial trade of ivory." The U.S., which was the second-largest market for ivory in the world, imposed a near-total ban on the import and export of these products last year.

Let's hope China lives up to its promising announcement, and that a prediction by the NRDC's Pepper comes true. She said China's ending of its ivory trade could be "the pivotal turning point that brings elephants back from the brink of extinction."

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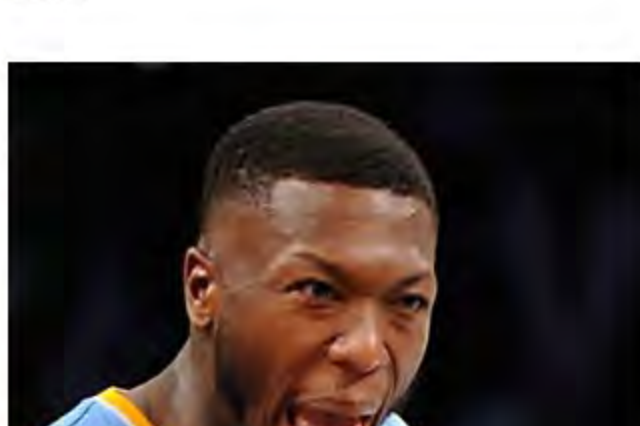
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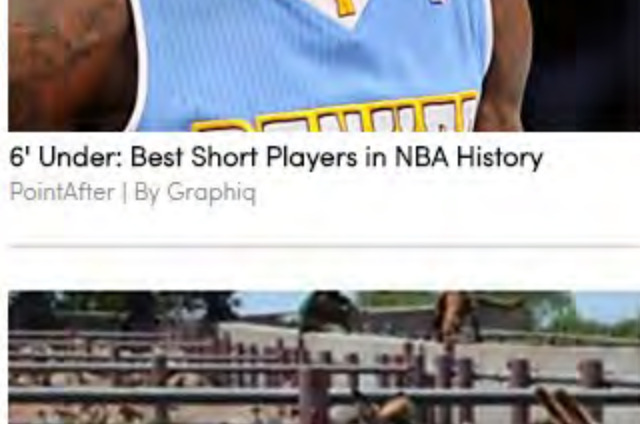


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Nancy BIELECKIE 7 hours ago

This sounds so promising and I am excited about the potential future for the elephant species with this news. I do hope for our planet's species that human interaction does not force situations to turn back. It is wonderful to have a greater population of elephants, and with more left alive, there will be a healthier herd in future. I am so proud of the officials that took the time to make real decisions that may help our animal species survive and potentially thrive. I do so hope that they took in to account the habitat that they will need to survive and thrive while they looked in to this issue. While elephants are not indigenous to North America, they are to parts of China I believe. This requires a big commitment from this country and I applaud and cheer them on in their efforts.

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Luisa de vignani 1 days ago

let's think positive!

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Marija M 2 days ago

great!

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Michelle M 3 days ago

Great news. I hope it extends to other species as well. They all need our help to survive. Thanks for sharing! 0)

[SEND](#) ★

Kay M 4 days ago

good

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Leah C 4 days ago

Hope they stick to it. Elephants are amazing and cute.

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Shirley Layfield 4 days ago

This is great news, thanks for sharing! ^_^

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Mariana L 5 days ago

wow great news

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Mariana L 5 days ago

thanks so much

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Marija M 7 days ago

tkx

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