



WWF

ANALYSIS

2016



SAVING SELOUS

AFRICAN ICON UNDER THREAT

AN ANALYSIS FOR WWF BY
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WWF'S CALL FOR COLLECTIVE GLOBAL ACTION

This document presents a story of threat and opportunity for one of Africa's largest World Heritage sites. Based on historic trends of elephant poaching,¹ by early 2022 we could see the last of Selous' elephants gunned down by heavily armed and well trained criminal networks that have turned poaching into an industrial scale global threat to conservation.

WWF has spent 30 years working in East Africa, including Tanzania,² and now stands with the government, UNESCO, local communities, and our partners to address the industrial scale threats to Selous Game Reserve that put 1.2 million people at risk.

We call on the public, the media and the international community to join us in achieving this urgent challenge: through a collaborative approach bringing together governments, local communities, industry and civil society groups, we can transform Selous into a success story in just a few short years.

Together we will

- **Stop industrial scale activities and achieve zero poaching of elephants in Selous by 2018.**
- **Begin to realize the full social and economic value that this World Heritage site provides to local, national and regional economies.**
- **Promote a model for sustainable development.**
- **Save our shared heritage.**

TANZANIA HAS AN INCREDIBLY RICH RANGE OF NATURAL ATTRACTIONS THAT DRAW OVER A MILLION TOURISTS EACH YEAR,³ AND GENERATE 17 PER CENT OF TANZANIA'S GDP⁴

Tanzania's tourism is predominantly nature-based, and includes world-renowned assets such as the great plains of Serengeti National Park, Mount Kilimanjaro and Zanzibar's marine attractions. In 2014, travel and tourism contributed almost US\$5 billion to Tanzania's GDP.⁵ The industry directly and indirectly supports more than 1.3 million jobs in Tanzania, or 12 per cent of total employment.^{6,7} Since 2008, the combined export revenues from travel and tourism have exceeded those from the mining and energy sector. Unlike the exports of minerals or agricultural commodities where revenues are vulnerable to global price volatility, demand in the tourism sector has been growing at a stable rate.⁸ By 2025, revenue from tourism is projected to increase by over 90 per cent, and tourism will likely be the number one contributing sector to Tanzania's GDP.^{9, 10}

TANZANIA'S TOURISM INDUSTRY IS CURRENTLY CONCENTRATED IN THE NORTH, BUT NATURAL ATTRACTIONS IN THE SOUTH HOLD HUGE POTENTIAL FOR FURTHER EXPANSION

Thus far, the tourism industry has largely focused on the northern circuit, which includes Mount Kilimanjaro and Serengeti National Park, while the southern circuit has remained relatively undeveloped. Tanzania's south holds equally impressive natural riches, including the Selous World Heritage site and Ruaha National Park. Both boast an amazing array of rare and vulnerable species. Selous, for example is home to 12 per cent of all endangered African wild dogs,¹¹ and Ruaha shelters 10 per cent of the world's last remaining lions.¹²

AS ONE OF THE PRIMARY ATTRACTIONS IN SOUTHERN TANZANIA, SELOUS HAS THE POTENTIAL TO SUPPORT INCREASED TOURISM, AND TO DRIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE REGION

Selous is the only site in southern Tanzania to have been awarded natural World Heritage status, which means it has "natural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity."¹³ Upon its inscription as a World Heritage site in 1982, Selous had one of the most significant concentrations of African elephant, black rhinoceros, hippopotamus, giraffe and cheetah in the world.¹⁴ Selous is one of the largest remaining wilderness areas in Africa, and is a top contributor of revenue among game reserves in Tanzania. With careful management, Selous has the potential to generate increased revenue in the future.



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THE THREATS

INDUSTRIAL-SCALE POACHING AND OTHER HARMFUL INDUSTRIAL ACTIVITIES ARE THREATENING THE ECONOMIC, NATURAL AND SOCIAL VALUES OF SELOUS

THE ELEPHANT POPULATION IN SELOUS HAS BEEN DECIMATED BY INDUSTRIAL-SCALE POACHING, WHICH PUTS AT RISK ONE OF THE MAIN ATTRACTIONS FOR LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL TOURISTS

In the mid-1970s, nearly 110,000 elephants lived within the boundaries of the Selous World Heritage site, but by 2007 the population was down to 70,406 in the broader ecosystem, which extends beyond the reserve. According to a 2014 elephant census, only 15,217 individuals remain in the Selous ecosystem.¹⁵ The rapid decline of elephants equates to a loss of almost 90 per cent in fewer than 40 years. During this period, poachers have been responsible for two waves of rapid depletion of elephant herds. The second wave occurred between 2010 and 2013 when an average of six elephants were killed every day by poaching syndicates throughout the Selous ecosystem.¹⁶

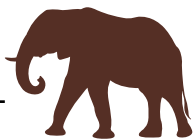
IF THE HISTORIC TREND OF INDUSTRIAL-SCALE POACHING CONTINUES, ELEPHANTS COULD DISAPPEAR FROM SELOUS WITHIN SIX YEARS

Since 1976, Selous has lost an average of almost 2,500 elephants annually. If this trend continues, elephants could vanish from Selous by early 2022.^{17,18} The elephant population in Selous is now near a historic low, and urgent measures are required to protect the remaining animals and return the population to a stable and sustainable size.¹⁹

HARMFUL INDUSTRIAL ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING OIL AND GAS EXPLORATION AND MINERAL EXTRACTION, POSE A THREAT TO THE WORLD HERITAGE SITE, PUT AT RISK ITS ABILITY TO SUPPORT COMMUNITIES, AND COULD LEAD TO INCREASED ELEPHANT POACHING

As of February 2016, 75 per cent of Selous is covered by oil and gas concessions, and there are 54 mining concessions across the reserve. Extractive industries cause environmental degradation, including the destruction of wildlife habitats in the immediate area around exploration sites. In 2012, the boundary of the Selous World Heritage site was modified to enable the construction of a large-scale uranium mine in the southern area of the reserve.^{20, 21} Once operational, the mine is expected to produce about 60 million tons of poisonous radioactive waste. Currently, there is no proven method to prevent contamination of surface and ground water, which are vital for both wildlife and nearby residents.²² The mine may also exacerbate the reserve's wildlife crime. According to the company operating the facility, "poachers took advantage when we built a road to the deposit."²³

6



BETWEEN 2010 AND 2013, 6 ELEPHANTS WERE KILLED IN SELOUS EVERY DAY

2022

IF THE TREND CONTINUES, ELEPHANTS COULD DISAPPEAR FROM SELOUS BY 2022.

75%



75 PER CENT OF SELOUS IS COVERED BY OIL AND GAS CONCESSIONS

IN ADDITION TO EXTRACTIVE ACTIVITIES, PLANNED INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS POSE THREATS TO THE INTEGRITY OF SELOUS, AS WELL AS ITS ABILITY TO SUPPORT WILDLIFE AND LOCAL PEOPLE

For example, the Rufiji River and its flooding pattern are essential to sustaining wetlands and a fertile floodplain near the reserve. Around 150,000 people living nearby are dependent upon these areas for their livelihoods,²⁴ and they are also critical for supporting wildlife populations. If constructed as planned, the Stiegler's Gorge dam would control 95 per cent of the Rufiji River's flow,²⁵ and could flood 1,100 square kilometres of Selous.²⁶ ²⁷ This could pose a serious threat to the ability of the World Heritage site to sustain animal populations.²⁸

1,100

**1,100KM OF SELOUS
COULD BE FLOODED BY
A DAM**

FURTHER DEGRADATION OF THE RESERVE, AND A FAILURE TO INCREASE THE VULNERABLE WILDLIFE POPULATIONS, WILL PRECLUDE SELOUS FROM SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE REGION IN THE FUTURE

Selous currently generates US\$6 million in annual revenues, which are distributed between the reserve, the national government, and more than 1.2 million people living in the surrounding area.²⁹ However, the income-generating potential of the site relies on its large wildlife populations and pristine natural ecosystems. The loss of elephants and the degradation of habitats reduces Selous' appeal to tourists, and also threatens the vital ecosystem services that it provides to local communities, such as water provision and carbon sequestration.³⁰ If left unchecked, harmful industrial activities and poaching will dramatically reduce the value of the reserve, making it difficult for the site to provide sufficient wildlife protection or to become economically self-sustaining. Without adequate protection, the site could be used for activities that are incompatible with conservation, resulting in Selous being stripped of its World Heritage status, which would reduce the income generated by the site.

1.2 MILLION

**MORE THAN 1.2 MILLION PEOPLE
LIVE NEAR SELOUS AND COULD
BENEFIT FROM SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT OF THE RESERVE**



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Immediate action is required to save Selous' elephants from poaching, to protect the reserve from harmful industrial activities, and to position Selous as a driver of long-term sustainable development in Tanzania.

There are a number of initiatives in progress that provide solutions to poaching. Over and above these activities, the five principles of sustainable management of World Heritage sites should be applied to Selous to help decision makers advance conservation and maximize sustainable development.

- 1. *Valuation that is socially conscious.***
The Tanzanian government should conduct a full social-economic valuation to assess the direct, indirect and non-use values of Selous. This should include a strategic environmental assessment of the wider Selous ecosystem to assess the impact of the proposed activities on Selous. These assessments should be used to inform all decision-making going forward.
- 2. *Investment decisions that focus on long-term value.***
The Tanzanian government should place equal value on the needs of current and future generations, and favour activities that drive long-term sustainable development and permanent job creation, such as carefully managed tourism, over those that prioritize profit in short-term such as oil, gas and mineral extraction.
- 3. *Governance that is representative of all beneficiaries.***
The role of local communities in protecting elephants outside Selous Game Reserve, especially in wildlife corridors, should be strengthened. Community involvement in the wildlife management areas surrounding the reserve is necessary in order to address poaching and to overcome human-wildlife conflicts in the long-term. The needs and views of people living near the reserve should be reflected in the decision-making process. Moreover, the benefit sharing framework for community groups from revenues generated through wildlife conservation should be strengthened.
- 4. *Policymaking that is evidence-based and transparent.***
The Tanzanian government's emergency action plan to address poaching in Selous should be based on all available information, and should have full support from all branches of government of Tanzania, as well as from civil society groups and technical experts. Policies that support this plan should be created, implemented and coordinated with other local and global initiatives focused on anti-wildlife trafficking, demand reduction, and increasing the tourism potential of Selous.
- 5. *Regulations that are enforced and followed.***
Effective measures should be implemented to ensure that laws and policies to deter poaching are enforced strictly. To tackle poaching and increase elephant numbers in Selous, the emergency action plan must be finalized and implemented with urgency. There is a need to strengthen the judiciary system, and to support the gathering and exchange of evidence for improved enforcement of laws and prosecution. The regulations that protect World Heritage sites from harmful activities, including the position held by the World Heritage Committee that extractive industries such as oil, gas and mineral extraction are incompatible with World Heritage status,^{31, 32} should be enforced in full and without exception. Tanzania supports this, as was shown in 2015 when UNESCO welcomed Tanzania's "clear commitment [...] to refrain from any form of mining within the property," and now the country needs to act on this commitment.³³

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To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which people live in harmony with nature.

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