

Oh no! Botswana lifts its ban on hunting elephants.



Botswana, Africa, has the most wild elephants in the world. At last count, it was 130,000. Under former President Ian Khama, there was a ban on hunting these majestic creatures who are poached for ivory. The current President Mokgweetsi Masisi started relaxing this ban shortly after he took over last year ([see what we have written on this subject earlier](#)), and has now completely lifted the ban.

Why would he do this? Some say that he is trying to win the favour of the people ahead of elections later this year. A lot of people had opposed the ban as it took away their source of livelihood. There is money to be made in hunting elephants – hunters come to the area, they buy permits, pay hefty fees, and hire guides for instance.

In addition, partly due to loss of habitat, elephants have been encroaching on farmlands, ruining crop, and intersecting with humans in other unfavourable ways.

How will this be controlled? It is unclear what the new rules will be. There might be a limited number of licenses that are handed out per year. We will have to wait and see. Conservationists however, do not think that hunting elephants is the answer to reducing conflict between elephants and humans – hunters will be going deep into the wild for their sport, not hunting elephants on farmland.

In addition, this may hurt the tourism industry in Botswana as it is a popular safari destination for many animal lovers who want to observe elephants in their natural habitat.

Where else are elephants found in large numbers? The World Wildlife Foundation (WWF) estimates that there are 415,000 elephants left in Africa, and 40,000 to 50,000 left in Asia.

Are elephant populations in danger? Yes they are. Poaching and habitat loss due to human activity and climate change are big threats to their existence.

What do you think about this? Write in to us in the comments section below and let us know!

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