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No decision taken on elephant culling

The Chief Executive of South African National Parks (SANParks), Mavuso Msimang , announced today that the policy of the organization on elephant culling in the national parks has not changed despite enormous challenges posed by high elephant growth rates in Kruger National Park .

"There has been no change in the policy decision taken by SANParks in 04 May 1995 to put a moratorium on the culling of elephants in national parks, despite recent articles in the media that may have given the impression to the contrary." said Msimang.

Msimang said, "We are still committed to our decision of exploring alternative ways of managing elephant populations in Kruger Park . Translocations in the wake of transfrontier conservation remain an option, even though this is extremely expensive not very effective. We are victims of our own success in managing elephants in enclosed systems. This has resulted in unmanageable population increases."

One of the biggest challenges facing SANParks and other conservation agencies is finding ranging space for the pachyderms. Enormous resources are required to pursue population control measures that exclude culling. Evidence of ecosystem destruction by elephants is there for all to see.

"Culling, be it of elephant or any species, is a management tool at the disposal of those charged with biodiversity management responsibilities the world over. However, this is used when alternative means have been deemed ineffective and the situation is threatening the ecological integrity of an area. An inclusive process will be followed prior to any change in the status quo." said Msimang.

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