

Statement on The Royal Thai Government's Destruction of Illegal Ivory  
August 26, 2015

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) commends the Royal Thai Government for its destruction of 2.1 tons of illegal ivory in Bangkok today. This ivory crush builds upon Thailand's recent efforts to stem the illegal trade in ivory by listing African elephants as a protected species under Thai law and strengthening regulations governing the possession and trade of ivory and ivory products.

Thailand has emerged as one of the largest ivory markets in the world. Earlier this year, Thai customs officials in a single bust seized 4 tons of ivory worth \$6 million representing the largest confiscation of its kind in Thailand. Data submitted to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) indicate organized criminal syndicates are heavily involved in trafficking of ivory between Africa and Thailand.

Leaders from Thailand's Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation and U.S. embassy officers met with the Service's Senior Special Agent, stationed in Bangkok, to develop best practices for their ivory crush. This professional, international teamwork exemplifies the importance of the Service's International Attaché program and its mission to support foreign governments in their efforts to stop wildlife trafficking.

Thailand's destruction of confiscated ivory sends a strong message to wildlife poachers, wildlife traffickers and consumers of illegal wildlife products worldwide. Like similar events held in the United States, the Philippines and China, the destruction of this ivory underscores the Royal Thai government's commitment to putting an end to wildlife trafficking. It will add significant momentum to the global fight to combat the illegal ivory trade and save the African elephant from extinction.

This effort requires immediate and long-term commitments from all of us. We look forward to building upon our partnership with Thailand and other governments, local communities, non-governmental organizations and the private sector at home and abroad to strengthen the global commitment to end wildlife trafficking.