

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Dan Ashe  
Statement on the Republic of Chad's Ivory Crush  
February 21, 2014**

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Dan Ashe issued the following statement today:**

“On behalf of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, I commend President Idriss Déby and the government of the Republic of Chad for destroying approximately one ton of confiscated ivory today. Chad now joins Kenya, Gabon, the Philippines, the United States, China, and France in the community of nations that have destroyed illegal ivory and has sent a clear signal that we will not tolerate ivory trafficking.

Fifty years ago, Chad was home to approximately 50,000 elephants. Today, following decades of poaching, only 1,500 remain. Poaching's devastating toll has not been limited to elephants; in Zakouma National Park alone, which today celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, 23 park guards have been killed in the line of duty since 1998. This includes, most recently, six game guards of the African Parks Network who were killed by poachers in September 2012.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has supported conservation efforts in Zakouma National Park since 1999. With partner organizations, we contributed to the purchase of an aircraft for dedicated use in securing Zakouma. Since then, the Service has provided ongoing annual support for operating costs required for anti-poaching patrols and rapid intervention. Through the recruitment of able-bodied rangers, professional training, regular provision of supplies and improved effectiveness, poaching in this region has decreased dramatically in the past few years and elephant numbers have stabilized. We are encouraged by the fact that over the last two years, not a single elephant has been lost to poaching in Zakouma National Park.

In destroying its illegal ivory today, the Chadian government is sending a clear signal that it will not tolerate poaching, and that the country will continue fighting for the survival of its elephants. We look forward to supporting our partners in Chad in their efforts towards achieving this critical goal, and to working with additional countries as they join us in our plight to save the world's elephants.”

To learn more about the U.S. ivory crush and U.S. efforts to combat wildlife trafficking, visit <http://www.fws.gov/international/wildlife-trafficking/index.html>