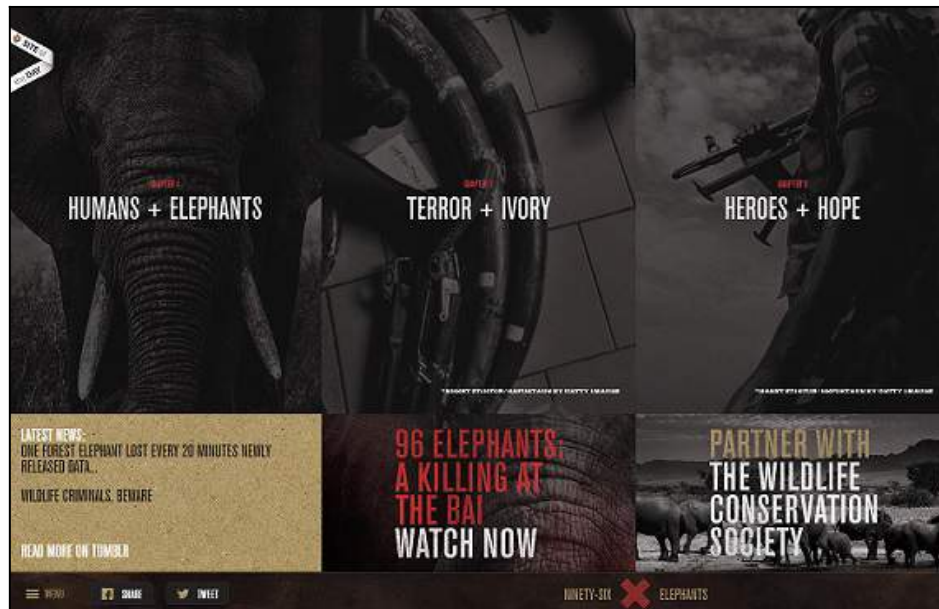


# Buttonwood Zoo joins partnership to fight elephant poaching



*96 elephants a day are slaughters in Africa*

The Buttonwood Park Zoo has joined The Wildlife Conservation Society as a partner on the recently launched 96 Elephants Campaign – an effort focused on securing a U.S. moratorium on illegal ivory; bolstering protection of African elephants; and educating the public about the link between ivory consumption and the elephant poaching crisis.

This is the latest conservation initiative for the Buttonwood Park Zoo. The partnership with WCS on 96 Elephants expands the reach of the campaign to New Bedford, Massachusetts, while furthering the conservation mission of the Buttonwood Park Zoo. The two organizations will work together to help raise awareness and drive action on behalf of saving elephants. 96 Elephants educates and engages the public through a series of activities including online petitions and letter writing campaigns enhanced through social media.

“The Buttonwood Park Zoo is proud to join the Wildlife Conservation Society in promoting the conservation of elephants and in raising awareness on the devastating impact of elephant poaching,” said Keith Lovett, Director of Zoological Services.

96 Elephants was named for the number of elephants gunned down each day for their ivory. The Wildlife Conservation Society launched the campaign in September in support of the Clinton Global Initiative’s (CGI) commitment to end the crisis facing Africa’s elephants.

According to the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), there are currently 166 African elephants and 142 Asian elephants in the AZA Elephant Species Survival Plan® (SSP), which means that there are more elephants killed in four days than exist in all of the AZA-accredited zoos combined.

Throughout Africa, elephant numbers have plummeted by 76 percent since 1980 due largely to the demand of elephant ivory with an estimated 35,000 slaughtered by poachers in 2012 alone.

The 96 Elephants campaign:

- Bolsters elephant protection in the wild by increasing support for park guards, intelligence networks, and government operations in the last great protected areas for elephants throughout the Congo Basin and East Africa. (WCS recently launched elephant protection programs in four new target sites: Ivindo National Park in Gabon; Okapi Faunal Reserve in the Democratic Republic of Congo; Ruaha and Katavi National Parks in Tanzania; and Niassa National Reserve in Mozambique. In these four sites alone, 44,000 elephants are at immediate risk.)
- Directly engages the elephant poaching crisis with high-tech tools ranging from drones and sophisticated remote cameras that track poachers in real-time, to specially trained sniffer dogs to find smuggled ivory in ports and trading hubs.
- Engages the public through a series of actions including online petitions and

letter writing campaigns enhanced through social media to support a U.S. moratorium, increase funding, and spread the word about demand and consumption of ivory. The Buttonwood Park Zoo will help educate the public about the link between the purchase of ivory products and the elephant poaching crisis, and support global moratoria and other policies that protect elephants.

96 Elephants dovetails with the CGI plan: “Partnership to Save Africa’s Elephants,” which includes other NGO partners and nation leaders. Leaders from seven African nations are calling for other countries to adopt trade moratoria on all commercial ivory imports, exports and domestic sales of ivory products until African elephant populations are no longer threatened by poaching. The partnership focuses on stopping the killing through increases in enforcement and improved management at 48 sites across Africa where two-thirds of the continents’ elephant population resides.

To learn more about the elephant crisis and how to help eradicate the demand for ivory, visit [www.96elephants.org](http://www.96elephants.org).

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