



environment, forestry & fisheries

Department:
Environment, Forestry and Fisheries
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

(For written reply)

QUESTION NO. 549 {NW605E}

INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 4 of 2021

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Mr D Bryant (DA) to ask the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment:

- (1) (a) On what date was the most recent survey on elephant numbers conducted in the Kruger National Park (KNP) and (b) what were the results;
- (2) what steps are being taken to ensure a symbiotic relationship between elephants and other indigenous animals at KNP;
- (3) how far is the process in regard to the review of the Elephant Management Plan which covers the period 1 January 2013 to 31 December 2022?

549. THE MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT REPLIES:


- (1)(a) The last survey was conducted during 2017.
 - (b) Sample-based methods during 2017 estimated that Kruger National Park had between 21,000 and 23,700 elephants.
- (2) The way that elephants influence other indigenous animals is dependent on how elephants and other indigenous animals respond to key resources such as food and water, or conditions such as temperature and danger. SANParks thus aims to maintain gradients of these resources

and/or conditions, offering niche opportunities for various species to thrive in synergy with each other. Often these resource gradients are degraded and in such instances, SANParks seeks to restore them. A good example is the closure of boreholes and many earthen dams to restore the natural gradients of water availability and water quality in the Kruger landscape. Such gradients vary from year to year, from season to season as well as from place to place.

Some of the lessons in Kruger also mirrors those of elsewhere. For instance, control of numbers in small parks, mostly through contraception, does not influence landscape use by elephants. Creating resource variability such as different access to water, as in Addo Elephant National Park, influences landscape use by elephants.

- (3) Revision of the elephant management plan is an ongoing process. Park management plans inform the technical details of elephant management plans that have a 10-year planning cycle in accordance with the existing approved elephant management plans that are compliant with the Elephant Norms and Standards. SANParks initiated parts of the review process for technical planning of elephant management in Kruger in 2019 and the other National Parks during early 2021. The review process is currently underway and has not been completed.

Regards



**MS B D CREECY, MP
MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

DATE: 11/3/2021