



**forestry, fisheries  
& the environment**

Department:  
Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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Ref: O2/1/5/2

**MINISTER  
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**(For written reply)**

**QUESTION NO. 2812 {NW3332E}**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 32 of 2021**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION: 10 December 2021**

**Ms A M M Weber (DA) to ask the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment:**

- (1) What are the (a) relevant details of zones of increased vigilance that are referred to in the annual report of SA National Parks 2020-21 and (b) zones of increased vigilance meant to achieve and/or emulate;
- (2) how (a) are the specified zones used in elephant management and (b) will the zones be practically implemented with elephant management;
- (3) how (a) will she know that the desired outcome in terms of elephant density has been achieved and (b) long is it estimated that the shift in density will last upon implementation?

**2812. THE MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT REPLIES:**

1. a. Zones of increased vigilance are areas identified for their increased elephant impact and where the intensity of use is influenced by various factors that may drive undesirable impacts on biodiversity at a local scale. Research conducted by SANParks indicates that the elephant impact is not directly related to elephant density, but rather to the places elephants use in a landscape, the time they spend in those areas, the demographics of the specific elephants and what they are doing when they are there (feeding, drinking, comfort and safety).

- b. The implementation of elephant management in the Kruger National Park (KNP) focuses on maintaining resource gradients in elephant habitats through fire, water and fence management policies. The zones of increased vigilance are intended to monitor elephant behaviour and influence elephant use space. Access to water, fencing off certain areas, the net-fencing of large trees and fire management are used to influence elephants' use of space. The outcome of the implementation of zones of increased vigilance is intended to ensure that elephants reduce the use of areas where they are impacting negatively on the local biodiversity.
  2.
    - a. The zones of increased vigilance are used to identify elephant impact areas (EIAs) where the intensity of use is influenced by various factors which may drive undesirable impacts on biodiversity at a local scale.
    - b. The new concept of "zones of increased vigilance" is under development and, at this stage, only elephant impact areas have been identified. The zones of increased vigilance and management therein, are under development in the KNP and are informed by the current Elephant Norms and Standards.
  3.
    - a. There is no specific final measure at this stage as the zones of increased vigilance relate to the impact of elephants on local zones and less on a large-scale shift of elephant densities. Progress will be assessed within an adaptive management approach. At this stage, local intensity of elephant use at the end of the dry season serves as a good index of disturbance and will be a useful indicator of elephant impact. Methods used to monitor intensity of use currently being validated include dung counts, mark recapture techniques using camera traps, and collared individual movement patterns.

- b. As research and validation is under way, it is not clear how long it will take for the interventions to yield meaningful results and guide ongoing management interventions.

Regards



**MS B D CREECY, MP**

**MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

**DATE: 22 December 2021**