



# forestry, fisheries & the environment

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

Ref: O2/1/5/2

## NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

(For written reply)

QUESTION NO. 744 {NW922E}

INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 12 OF 2024

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**Ms T Breedt (FF Plus) to ask the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment:**

- (1) What was the total estimated elephant population at 31 December 2023 in the (a) Kruger National Park (KNP) and (b) area of the Associated Private Nature Reserves (APNR), bordering on the KNP;
- (2) On what date was the last count conducted to estimate the total number of elephants in the (a) KNP and (b) APNR;
- (3) What were the confidence levels within which the specified numbers were calculated;
- (4) Whether she will make a statement on the trend of the elephant population numbers in the KNP in relation to previous years; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details?

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

- (1) (a) The South African National Parks (SANParks) only surveyed elephants in the southern half of the Kruger National Park in 2023. To avoid presenting these figures to poachers the actual number can be discussed with the Honourable Member offline.

- (b) SANParks does not have jurisdiction over Associated Private Nature Reserves (APNR), hence they cannot give the estimated elephant population in the APNR. This could be requested from the provincial conservation agencies.
- (2) (a) The last count, to estimate the number of elephants at the KNP, was conducted from 15 August 2021 to 19 September 2021.
- (b) SANParks does not have jurisdiction over the Associated Private Nature Reserves (APNR), hence they cannot give the date of the last count and the estimated elephant population at APNR. This could be requested from the provincial conservation agencies.
- (3) Most of South Africa's elephants live in the KNP where elephant trends traditionally made use of total counts. This approach, however, has no precision. Total counts also assume that sample errors and various biases have negligible impact on population trends. Elephant population estimates and trends in these are key aspects of evaluating their conservation status. We used simultaneous total and sample counts of elephants to develop a correction factor for total counts. During 2020, we used a sample aerial survey that considered sample errors to provide an elephant population estimate in Kruger. Sample errors result in approximately 15% underestimate of Kruger elephants.
- (4) No, the above responses are sufficient



MS B D CREECY, MP  
MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT  
DATE: 3/4/2024