



Madikwe Elephant Situation - Fact Sheet

18 May 2026

Background

Madikwe Nature Reserve currently has 1,600 elephants, substantially more than originally intended, a situation created by years of official inaction. The high number of elephants has modified the vegetation, but little scientific evidence exists for biodiversity loss. No other species has declined due to elephant abundance. Recent good rains have removed the immediate threat of starvation.

Current Situation

1. Elephant Management Plan (EMP) approved by Minister in 2024
2. The EMP does not authorise culling.
3. A Provincial Task Team (PTT) was formed in early 2025.
4. The NWPB and PTT were instructed by the PCFFE to:
 - a. Present a PTT report by 24 November 2025 - NEVER DONE.
 - b. Provide the NSPCA with minutes of PTT meetings and include in future meetings - NEVER DONE.
5. Free contraception was offered by an NGO to the NWPB in 2020; an MOU was only signed in 2024 but has not been implemented.
6. The failure by the NWPTB to implement contraception since 2020 has resulted in the avoidable births of at least 400 elephants, with a further 50% of adult females expected to be currently pregnant, potentially resulting in another 200 to 300 births that could have been avoided.
7. No cognisance appears to have been taken by the NWPB of the effect on tourism numbers and the consequent impact on local communities' income due to culling.
8. No cognisance appears to have been taken by the NWPB of tourist safety in relation to culling.

Notes

Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment Willie Aucamp has stated:

"Culling is not routinely permitted and may only be considered under exceptional circumstances where all other management options have been exhausted and where such intervention is explicitly provided for within an approved EMP."

"Any such consideration must be fully compliant with the applicable norms and standards, supported by scientific evidence, and subject to the necessary regulatory approvals."

NWPB Protected Areas Elephant Carrying Capacities (CC)						
Protected Area	Size km2	Suggested elephant no's at CC	Calculated CC /km2	Elephant numbers 2025	Elephants /km2 2025	Planned removals
Madikwe	750	250	0,3	1633	2,2	?
Pilanesberg	572	250	0,4	295	0,5	?

**Carrying capacities from NWPB 2024 Oversight report*