



**EleWatch,
an initiative for the promotion and development of
Elephant-Watching, as a long-term solution for the protection of elephants and
the achievement of harmonious Human-Elephant coexistence.**

Update: January 2018

(Vannes, January 10, 2018) - EleWatch, contraction of "Elephant Watching", is the observatory and network for the promotion of elephants and their natural habitats by an ecotourism economically viable, socially equitable, and ecologically responsible.

The objectives of the initiative are the development, monitoring, and promotion of tourist visits to natural areas where elephants live. Launched in April 2015, this initiative was instrumental for conducting an exhaustive pilot assessment of the situation in Africa and Asia. Preliminary results, published in September 2016, highlight that nearly 70% of the 600 sites identified are under promoted. A summary of these results is available in the following pages.

EleWatch is a collaborative program open to all those who believe that developing elephant-related ecotourism is crucial for their protection, as well as for achieving positive Human-Elephant coexistence. This program is currently sponsored by several institutions : IFAW France and Francophone Africa, the Swiss Fondation Franz Weber, as well as the French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs. In 2017, EleWatch joined the Sustainable Tourism Program of the Ten-Year Framework for Sustainable Consumption and Production (10YFP - STP) led by the UNWTO.

EleWatch is a French initiative proposed by the NGO *Des Elephants & des Hommes* which has more than 15 years of field experience in Africa and Asia. The vision of EleWatch is based on the robust observation of a positive correlation between the level of ecotourism development of a region and elephants' conservation status. Where nature tourism is well developed, elephants and their natural habitats are well promoted, significant sustainable employment and livelihoods are generated and positive Human-Elephant coexistence is possible. Conversely, where nature tourism for wildlife is insufficiently developed, poaching is growing, destruction of natural environments face few obstacles, and Human-Elephant coexistence is negative.

While we mostly worry about tourist overcrowding in famous and widely promoted national parks, little interest is given to the fact that the vast majority of national parks and natural spaces in Africa and Asia do not have enough tourism flow, especially national visitors.



The issue of national tourism is crucial. More than fifteen year experience in environmental education in Southern, Central and Western Africa have taught us that in Africa less than 1 child out of 5 has already seen an elephant, while in Western Europe and the United States more than 4 out of 5 children have seen an elephant before the age of 12! How can we hope to sustainably protect elephants in countries where the youth is not positively exposed to these fascinating and magnificent ambassadors of terrestrial biodiversity? Is it not our duty to develop Elephant-Watching in order for environmental education to be massively developed for schools of all 50 countries where elephants still live?

In 2017, the goal of the EleWatch initiative was to design the EleWatch collaborative website where all available information about Elephant-Watching will be shared. A model of the website is finalized and its development is in progress. All stakeholders will be invited to participate and benefit from this tool.

This website, which is scheduled to be online in 2018, will introduce, first and foremost in English and French, to the general public all natural areas where Elephant-Watching is already taking place or could be developed. It will serve as a showcase for all stakeholders: conservationists of national parks where elephants live, managers of protected or natural areas, owners or managers of private reserves, heads of tourism institutions (offices or directions of tourism), tower -operators regularly going to elephant natural areas, owners and managers of hotels and camps, naturalist guides, NGOs and local associations, independent individuals who, professionally or not, are interested in the development of elephant-related ecotourism (photography, scientific interest, observation, contemplation ...).

In addition, the EleWatch website will allow all contributing actors to access the entire network of stakeholders and communicate with experts with complementary skills. Together, we will succeed in expressing the full potential of Elephant-Watching, which is now largely under-promoted.

If your profile matches, we invite you to join us now, simply by sending us an email at contact@elewatch.net, by joining the [EleWatch LinkedIn group](#), and by following the [EleWatch Facebook page](#).

Thank you for spreading this message as widely as possible to the people whom you consider could be part of the EleWatch network.

Julien Marchais – EleWatch Initiative coordinator - www.elewatch.net





EleWatch : To Protect Elephants, Let's go admire them !

Reality and potential development
of national and international ecotourism
in natural areas where elephants live



Edition 2016



Elephant Watching, long-term solution for elephant conservation and positive human-elephant coexistence

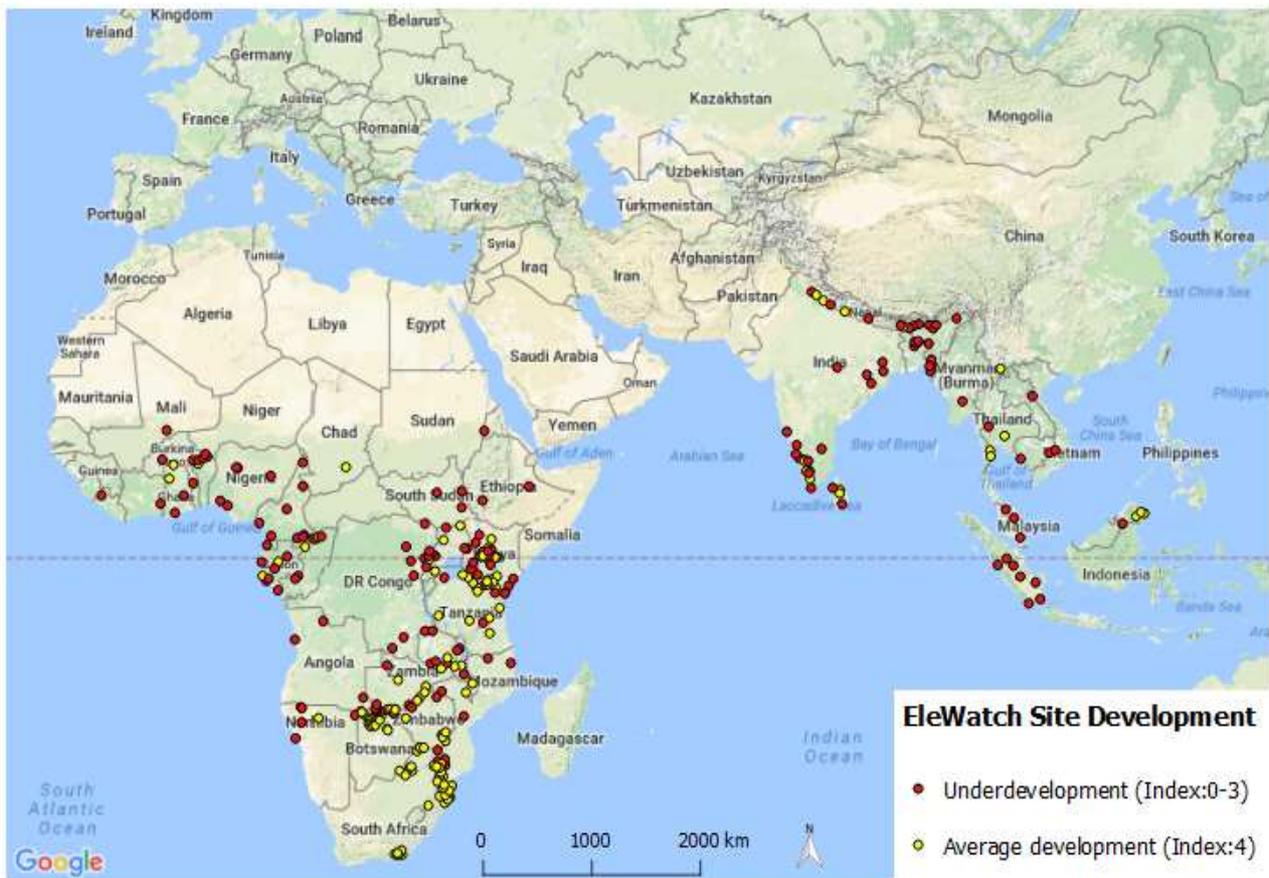
Elephants are fascinating and complex social beings. As ecosystem engineers and “megagardeners of the forests”, elephants modify their environment and are essential to the survival of many species. In addition, they are part of the world heritage and have a long history of associations with humans.

Across their entire geographic range, elephants are subject to ever growing human pressures. In addition to poaching, one of the main threats to their survival is the reduction and fragmentation of their habitats due to exploding human demography. As a result, wherever they exist wild elephants are in conflict with humans often from unprivileged communities struggling to maintain a decent life. To sustainably conserve elephants it is essential to improve human-elephant coexistence.

With the escalating decline of elephants over the last decade, in 2015, the NGOs *Des Eléphants & des Hommes*, supported by *Awely, wildlife and people*, and *IFAW France (International Fund for Animal Welfare)* launched the Elephant-Watching initiative or EleWatch. The mission of EleWatch is to promote the economic and non-economic (ecological, cultural, patrimonial, social, and aesthetic) value of elephants and their natural habitats through development of national and international ecotourism programs across their entire geographic range. EleWatch recognizes inclusive Elephant-Watching ecotourism as an important way forward for long term conservation of elephants and their coexistence with humans. This responsible form of tourism guarantees minimal impacts of ecotourists on wild elephant populations. It represents an economic activity that, if correctly developed, can constitute an efficient barrier against the various threats that elephants face and can support the creation of stable jobs and revenues for local communities.

As a first step, EleWatch investigated 544 natural areas (national parks, private or community reserves, and various protected areas...) spread over 37 African countries and 13 Asian countries where wild elephants are found and can be observed. EleWatch first results indicate that the situation is particularly worrisome: across almost 70% of these natural areas, Elephant-Watching ecotourism is vastly under-developed.

The map below shows, for the 50 countries of the geographic range of elephants, a first overview of the state of development of Elephant Watching. Nearly 600 sites have been studied, almost exhaustively. Red dots show sites where elephant related tourism is clearly under-developed (70%). There is a great disparity among countries that offer Elephant-Watching ecotourism. While regions such as Southern and East Africa have been able to promote Elephant-Watching ecotourism to a certain extent (respectively 57.1% and 31.1%), in West Africa, Central Africa, and most of Asia this activity is barely developed (EWI: respectively 4.3%, 7.8%, and 18.8%).



EleWatch is sounding the alarm on the surprising lack of value given to elephants and their natural habitats across most of their current geographic range. To fight efficiently against the elephant decline, EleWatch emphasizes that one of the vital solution is to make Elephant-Watching ecotourism a development priority and suggests that countries which are well established destinations for Elephant-Watching be used as advanced models for other countries where this activity has not yet flourished. EleWatch will play a central role in active sharing of knowledge, best practices, and expertise between recognized Elephant-Watching sites, provided there is sufficient political drive and investment power.

To combine elephant conservation efforts, EleWatch is requesting all countries within the geographic range of elephants to join its network and:

1. Associate any project whose aim is to protect elephants with the development of national plans for Elephant-Watching.
2. Develop these national plans following meticulous guidelines to avoid the negative effects of tourism.

EleWatch is a French initiative sponsored by the *Franz Weber Foundation*.

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