

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Dan Ashe
Statement on China's Ivory Crush
January 6, 2014

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Dan Ashe issued the following statement today:

“On behalf of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, I commend the government of the People’s Republic of China for its destruction today of more than six tons of illegal ivory, in the city of Guangzhou, Guangdong Province. This destruction underscores China’s renewed commitment to the growing fight against global wildlife trafficking that now threatens the future of African elephants, rhinoceros, tigers, and other iconic species. As the world’s two largest markets for wildlife products, the United States and China must play a leadership role in reducing illegal demand, cracking down on trafficking networks, and otherwise ensuring that wildlife trade is legal and sustainable. Along with the United States’ destruction of its seized ivory in November, today’s action by China sends a clear and powerful message to poachers, traffickers and consumers that wildlife crime will not be tolerated. Our two nations now join Kenya, Gabon and the Philippines, in the community of nations that have destroyed their illegal ivory. We are very pleased to hear that France will also destroy illegal elephant ivory this year.

Time is growing short for the world to act. Unless the illegal and inhumane slaughter of elephants, rhinos and other irreplaceable species is halted, we will likely see them disappear from the wild in the next several decades. In order to prevent the loss of our natural heritage, we must expand and deepen our efforts as an international community to protect and restore surviving populations, crack down on criminal poaching and trafficking rings, reduce demand in consumer countries, and foster and manage legal and sustainable wildlife trade. We all have a stake in ensuring the survival of wild animal and plant species at risk, and the Chinese government’s action today serves as yet another catalyst for further action. We look forward to working with our counterparts in China and across the world to continue our recent progress.”