

In 1972/73 when I extended my research into the ivory trade by actually becoming a buyer in the southern Sudan, I realised for the first time, just how much greater it was than conventionally perceived. Not only was the traffic in tusks orders of magnitude greater, but it indicated unequivocally that Africa's elephants must number in millions rather than thousands. It followed that the politics of conservation would involve far more than had hitherto been involved.

Initially, I approached the Executive Officer of the East African Wildlife Society - Mr Michael Sawyer and a member of his Executive Committee - Mr Ted Norris - and laid the evidence before them.

Their reactions were surprising: they were hostile, did not want the Society involved with the evidence, and recommended that I took it to the Attorney General of Kenya - Mr Charles Njonjo - who was a Society Patron. This was cynical to say the least, because the Kenya Government was deeply involved in ivory trafficking and both Sawyer & Norris knew that I would bring retribution upon my own head if I followed their advice.

Subsequently I talked to Mr Jack Block and Ellis Marks - who had recently founded a local Kenya Chapter of WWF. Their reaction was different and I produced this "White" Ivory Report (A Background to the Ivory Trade). It was confidential and was not to be copied and shown to anyone else, pending discussion on what to do. Unfortunately Jack Block allowed Dr Hugh Lamprey to photocopy the report and Hugh Lamprey made it available to IUCN - telling me that "I had absolutely no right to conceal this information!" My personal and only copy of this white (so called because it had a white cover with red tape down the spine) report was stolen by an NIBC reporter. This copy was stolen of an IUCN desk in Switzerland by Dr Iain Douglas-Hamilton (from his lips). I took it from him.

Paul