



Elephants play in Amboseli National Park on February 10. REUTERS

## ILLEGAL BUSINESS

# US ban on ivory trade passed to protect the African jumbo

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The United States Fish and Wildlife Service has passed a rule to enforce a near-total ban on elephant ivory trade.

The rule fulfills restrictions under President Barack Obama's 2013 Executive Order on Combating Wildlife Trafficking. It substantially limits imports, exports and sales of African elephant ivory across the states.

The rule is limited to African elephant ivory. It does not regulate ivory and bone derived from other animals, such as walrus, whale and mammoth.

US Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell said the bold action underscores

the United States' leadership and commitment to end poaching.

Jewell, who serves as the co-chair of Obama's Task Force on Wildlife Trafficking, said she hopes other nations will implement similar regulations.

"They are crucial to ensure our grandchildren and their children know these iconic species," Jewell said.

United States Fish and Wildlife Service Director Dan Ashe said the new rule was proposed in 2015.

He said the service has received more than 1.3 million comments from the public, demonstrating that Americans overwhelmingly support African elephant conservation. The final rule prohibits most commerce in ivory but makes specific, limited exceptions for

certain pre-existing manufactured items - such as musical instruments, furniture pieces and firearms - that contain less than 200gm of ivory and meet other specific criteria.

"These items are not drivers of elephant poaching and do not provide cover for traffickers," Ashe said.

Federal law enforcement investigations demonstrate that wildlife traffickers have exploited loopholes prior regulations allowing for legal trade in ivory.

The new rule will provide federal agents with clear view to identify illegal ivory. An estimated 100,000 elephants have been killed in three years.

This is an average of one every 15 minutes.

## (+) KENYA SETS ABLAZE IVORY

On April 30, President Uhuru Kenyatta led the burning of 105 tonnes of ivory and 1.35 tonnes of rhino horn. This was to send a message to the world that Kenya will not tolerate poaching. The country plans to propose a total ban on illegal ivory trade later this year. KWS director general Kitili Mbatia said: "Kenya has decided to burn ivory because the moment you burn it, you are making it beyond economic use." He said trophy disposal is left for countries to decide. Some opt to crush it.