

Tragelaphus derbianus, Giant Eland

Assessment by: IUCN SSC Antelope Specialist Group



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Taxonomy

Kingdom	Phylum	Class	Order	Family
Animalia	Chordata	Mammalia	Cetartiodactyla	Bovidae

Taxon Name: *Tragelaphus derbianus* (Gray, 1847)

Infra-specific Taxa Assessed:

- *Tragelaphus derbianus* ssp. *derbianus*
- *Tragelaphus derbianus* ssp. *gigas*

Common Name(s):

- English: Giant Eland, Derby's Eland, Lord Derby's Eland
- French: Éland de Derby

Taxonomic Notes:

There are two recognized subspecies: Western Giant Eland (*Tragelaphus derbianus derbianus*) and Eastern Giant Eland (*T. d. gigas*) (East 1999). The species is referred to as *Taurotragus derbianus* by Grubb (2005).

Assessment Information

Red List Category & Criteria: Vulnerable C1 [ver 3.1](#)

Year Published: 2017

Date Assessed: July 25, 2016

Justification:

The global population is estimated at 12,000-14,000 at most, hence <10,000 mature individuals. There is a continuing decline due to snaring, poaching for bushmeat, encroachment into protected areas (PAs) and expansion of agriculture and livestock grazing. The rate of decline is predicted to exceed 10% over three generations (24 years). Effective protection in PAs and well-managed sustainable trophy hunting programmes play a key role in the conservation of this species and any weakening of these efforts will accelerate the rate of decline.

Previously Published Red List Assessments

2008 – Least Concern (LC)

<http://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2008.RLTS.T44172A10867579.en>

1996 – Lower Risk/near threatened (LR/nt)

1994 – Vulnerable (V)

Geographic Range

Range Description:

In the past, the Giant Eland probably occurred throughout the relatively narrow belt of savanna woodland which extends across West and Central Africa from Senegal to the Nile. The gap in its recent distribution between Mali and eastern Nigeria contains extensive areas of apparently suitable habitat (East 1999).

The Western Giant Eland (*T. d. derbianus*) has been formerly reported from Senegal to Togo, though its occurrence in Togo might have been a mistaken confusion with Bongo (*Tragalephaus eurycerus*) (Grubb *et al.* 1998). The subspecies is confirmed in south-eastern Senegal, and may occur seasonally in the far north of Guinea, and south-western Mali and possibly E Guinea-Bissau (East 1999, Darroze 2004, Planton and Michaux 2013).

Eastern Giant Elands (*T. d. gigas*) were formerly distributed from north-eastern Nigeria to north-west Uganda. They now survive mainly in north-east Central African Republic. A separate population lives in northern Cameroon, with herds crossing the Chad border to the east; occasional vagrants may enter Nigerian territory. They still occur in South Sudan, where they were recently recorded in Southern National Park (Fay *et al.* 2007), from which they may visit north-eastern DR Congo and north-west Uganda (East 1999, Planton and Michaux 2013).

Country Occurrence:

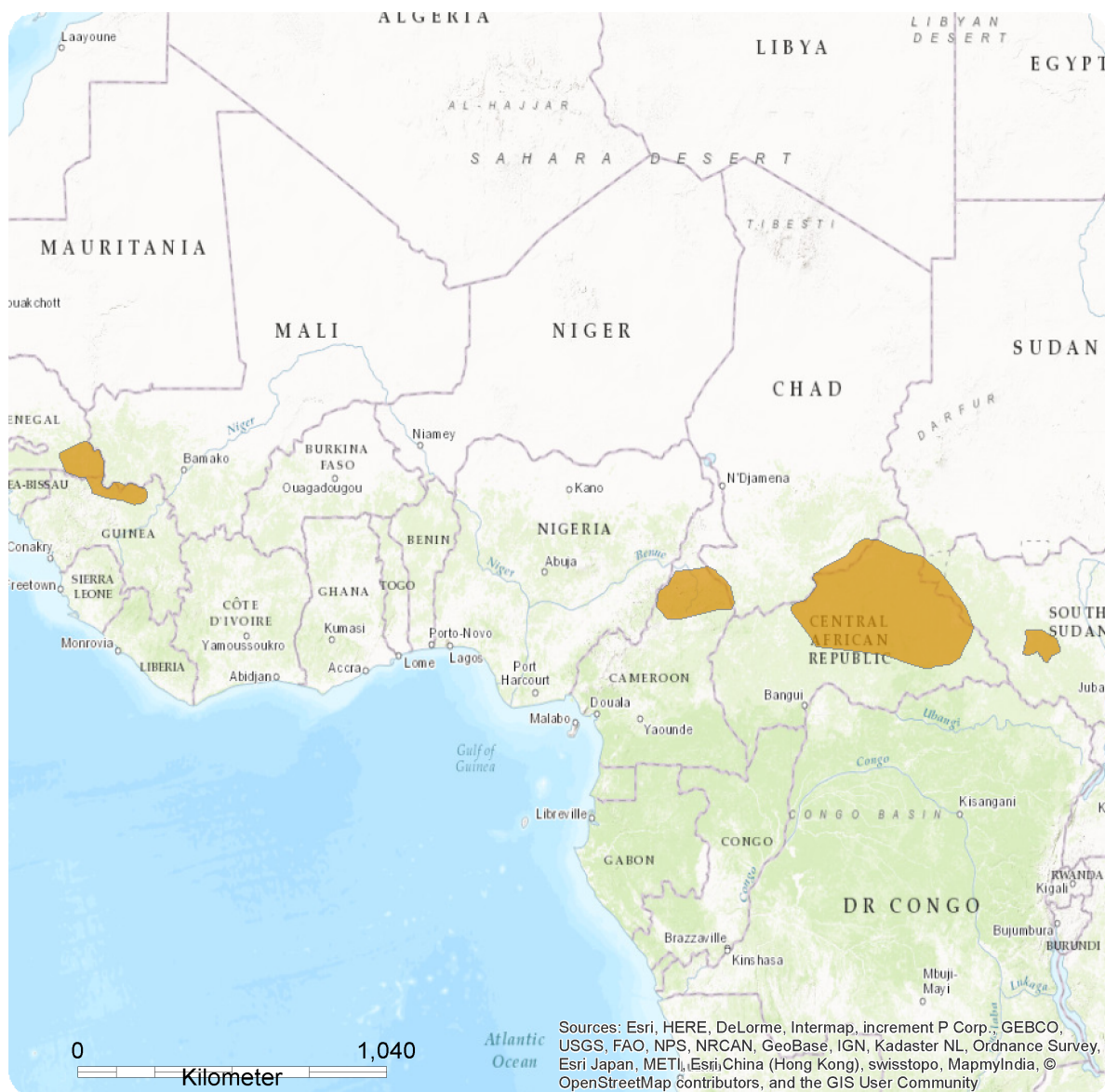
Native: Cameroon; Central African Republic; Chad; Guinea; Mali; Senegal; South Sudan

Possibly extinct: Uganda

Regionally extinct: Côte d'Ivoire; Gambia; Ghana; Togo

Distribution Map

Tragelaphus derbianus



Range

Extant (resident)

Compiled by:

IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature)



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply any official endorsement, acceptance or opinion by IUCN.



Population

East (1999) estimated that there were probably more than 15,000 Eastern Giant Eland remaining, with over 12,500 in the CAR. Numbers increased in CAR, Cameroon and Chad in the 1990s. The numbers that survive in South Sudan are unknown (165 estimated in Southern NP, South Sudan in 2007; Fay *et al.* 2007). This suggests a total population of the Eastern Giant Eland at the time of around 15,000-20,000. However, political instability and civil conflict in South Sudan and CAR in the last 10-15 years have greatly disrupted protection and management in PAs and halted trophy hunting operations in many parts of CAR. At the same time, hunting for bushmeat and encroachment into PAs by agriculturalists and livestock herders have increased. Numbers in northern Cameroon may be stable or declining more slowly, but overall the global population is now estimated to be no more than 12,000-14,000 and declining.

Total numbers of the Western Giant Eland are probably 150-200 individuals, with almost all the surviving animals in Senegal (Brandlová *et al.* 2013, Planton and Michaux 2013).

Current Population Trend: Decreasing

Habitat and Ecology (see Appendix for additional information)

Giant Eland inhabit woodlands and forested Sudanian to Guinean savannas, never far from hilly/rocky landscapes nor from water (Planton and Michaux 2013). Kingdon (1997) considered that it is quite strictly confined to *Isoberlinia doka* woodland, but recent studies indicate that its range includes areas of *Terminalia-Combretum-Afzelia* woodland where there is no *Isoberlinia*, for example, in parts of Cameroon's North Province such as Boumedje Hunting Concession (Bro-Jorgensen 1997). Giant Elands feed mostly on leaves, shoots, herbs and fruits (but occasionally on grasses), and will drink daily where water is available (Planton and Michaux 2013).

Systems: Terrestrial

Use and Trade

The Giant Eland is hunted for food and sport. Trophy hunting quotas have been established in parts of the species range and sustainable trophy hunting is a key to the Giant Eland's future; with mature bulls being one of the world's most prized big game trophies (East 1999). Traditionally, the Fulani people did not hunt them, as they believed to transmit diseases and cast spells (Planton and Michaux 2013).

Threats (see Appendix for additional information)

The distribution of Derby Eland is mainly restricted to PAs and hunting zones. In CAR and South Sudan, political instability and armed conflict are major barriers to the implementation of effective protection and management. Bushmeat hunting, snaring, encroachment by livestock grazers and smallholder cultivation are threats across most of the range. In the past, Giant Eland suffered heavy mortality from rinderpest, to which it is said to be more susceptible than any other antelope. Its demise in The Gambia has been attributed primarily to the devastating effects of this disease (Camara 1990). Populations in the Central African region crashed by 60-80% during and after the 1983-1984 rinderpest outbreak, but later recovered (East 1999).

The Western Giant Eland has been reduced to very low numbers by factors such as over-hunting for meat and habitat destruction caused by the expansion of human and livestock populations.

Conservation Actions (see Appendix for additional information)

Major surviving populations of Eastern Giant Eland occur in Faro, Benoue and Bouba Ndjidda N.P. and most of the 27 surrounding hunting concessions in northern Cameroon, and in Bamingui-Bangoran and Manovo-Gounda-St Floris N.P.s and most of the hunting blocks in CAR, including Chinko (East 1999, Planton and Michaux 2013). However, many of the hunting concessions in CAR are inactive due to political instability and insecurity, factors that also affect PA management.

The only known population of Western Giant Eland occurs in Senegal's Niokolo-Koba N.P., but this may number no more than 150-200.

Effective long-term management of national parks and hunting zones in Cameroon and eastern Central African Republic would contribute to the survival of Eastern Giant Eland. Safari hunting is the most likely justification for the long-term preservation of the substantial areas of unmodified savanna woodland which this antelope requires, and sustainable trophy hunting is a key to the Giant Eland's future. Mature bulls are one of the world's most prized big game trophies (East 1999).

The survival of the Western Giant Eland depends on continued protection of the Niokolo-Koba population in Senegal.

Individuals of both subspecies are held in captivity (East 1999, Planton and Michaux 2013). A semi-captive breeding group of Western Giant Eland using founders from Niokolo-Koba was established in 2000 in Bandia Reserve, Senegal. There have been 30 births at Bandia between 2000 and 2006 (M. Antonínová and P. Hejčmanová, in Planton and Michaux 2013), and a second enclosure has been built in Fathala Reserve, to which a male-only group (9) and a breeding nucleus (1, 3) were translocated in mid-2006 (Antonínová *et al.* 2006). The semi-captive populations in Bandia and Fathala reserves totalled 92 animals in 2013 (Brandlová *et al.* 2013).

A conservation strategy for Western Giant Eland has been developed (Brandlová *et al.* 2013).

Credits

Assessor(s): IUCN SSC Antelope Specialist Group

Reviewer(s): Cooke, R.

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External Resources

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Appendix

Habitats

(<http://www.iucnredlist.org/technical-documents/classification-schemes>)

Habitat	Season	Suitability	Major Importance?
1. Forest -> 1.5. Forest - Subtropical/Tropical Dry	Resident	Suitable	Yes
2. Savanna -> 2.1. Savanna - Dry	Resident	Suitable	Yes

Threats

(<http://www.iucnredlist.org/technical-documents/classification-schemes>)

Threat	Timing	Scope	Severity	Impact Score
1. Residential & commercial development -> 1.1. Housing & urban areas	Ongoing	Minority (50%)	Slow, significant declines	Low impact: 5
	Stresses:	1. Ecosystem stresses -> 1.1. Ecosystem conversion 1. Ecosystem stresses -> 1.2. Ecosystem degradation		
2. Agriculture & aquaculture -> 2.3. Livestock farming & ranching -> 2.3.1. Nomadic grazing	Ongoing	Minority (50%)	Slow, significant declines	Low impact: 5
	Stresses:	1. Ecosystem stresses -> 1.1. Ecosystem conversion 1. Ecosystem stresses -> 1.2. Ecosystem degradation		
2. Agriculture & aquaculture -> 2.3. Livestock farming & ranching -> 2.3.2. Small-holder grazing, ranching or farming	Ongoing	Minority (50%)	Slow, significant declines	Low impact: 5
	Stresses:	1. Ecosystem stresses -> 1.1. Ecosystem conversion 1. Ecosystem stresses -> 1.2. Ecosystem degradation		
5. Biological resource use -> 5.1. Hunting & trapping terrestrial animals -> 5.1.1. Intentional use (species is the target)	Ongoing	Minority (50%)	Slow, significant declines	Low impact: 5
	Stresses:	2. Species Stresses -> 2.1. Species mortality		
6. Human intrusions & disturbance -> 6.2. War, civil unrest & military exercises	Ongoing	Minority (50%)	Causing/could cause fluctuations	Low impact: 5
	Stresses:	2. Species Stresses -> 2.1. Species mortality 2. Species Stresses -> 2.2. Species disturbance		
8. Invasive and other problematic species, genes & diseases -> 8.5. Viral/prion-induced diseases -> 8.5.2. Named species	Past, unlikely to return	Minority (50%)	Rapid declines	Past impact
	Stresses:	2. Species Stresses -> 2.2. Species disturbance		

Conservation Actions in Place

(<http://www.iucnredlist.org/technical-documents/classification-schemes>)

Conservation Actions in Place
In-Place Land/Water Protection and Management
Conservation sites identified: Yes, over entire range
Occur in at least one PA: Yes
In-Place Species Management
Subject to ex-situ conservation: Yes

Conservation Actions Needed

(<http://www.iucnredlist.org/technical-documents/classification-schemes>)

Conservation Actions Needed
1. Land/water protection -> 1.1. Site/area protection
2. Land/water management -> 2.1. Site/area management
3. Species management -> 3.1. Species management -> 3.1.1. Harvest management
3. Species management -> 3.2. Species recovery
3. Species management -> 3.3. Species re-introduction -> 3.3.1. Reintroduction

Research Needed

(<http://www.iucnredlist.org/technical-documents/classification-schemes>)

Research Needed
1. Research -> 1.2. Population size, distribution & trends
2. Conservation Planning -> 2.3. Harvest & Trade Management Plan
3. Monitoring -> 3.1. Population trends

Additional Data Fields

Population
Number of mature individuals: 8400-9800
Continuing decline of mature individuals: Yes
Extreme fluctuations: No
Population severely fragmented: No
Habitats and Ecology
Generation Length (years): 8.0

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