



# Global March for Elephants and Rhinos

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## GMFER Year-End Report—2022

*In the end, we will conserve only what we love, we will love only what we understand, and we will understand only what we are taught.*

Baba Dioum, Senegal.



As the twilight of 2022 ushers in a new year, GMFER and its crew wish you a happy and blessed 2023.

GMFER strives to build human communities that see non-human communities as deserving of justice. The women, men and children who live with and adjacent to earth's last wild places are the living heart at the intersection of endangered species and effective conservation strategies.

2022 has seen GMFER's mission to amplify the voices of the indigenous come into meaningful focus. Our advocacy has strengthened through lessons learned and strategic organizational development. Humility, passion, and drive have been key ingredients in moving our vision, mission, and hopes into the future.

With a nominal budget, low overhead, and a largely all-volunteer staff, we are proud to define ourselves as uniquely effective in the realm of grass roots advocacy allied with paradigm shifting conservation efforts.

*The mission of the Global March for Elephants and Rhinos (#GMFER) is to #MarchAgainstExtinction and work with indigenous communities to influence governments and world leaders to STOP the poaching of elephants and rhinos; our vision is to END the trade in ivory and rhino horn and to strive for a livable earth for all living things.*



## GMFER in 2022:

### (1) New board members

GMFER welcomed several dynamic board members in 2022: Panchali Panapitiya from Sri Lanka is the co-founder and director for the Asian elephant advocacy organization, **RARE**, in Sri Lanka; Nicolás Eliades Vesga from Spain, is the founder and director of the international PR agency, **The Clima** whose focus is climate and ecological emergencies; Sergeant Nkateko Letti Mzimba is from South Africa, and is a ranking member of **Transfrontier Africa's** Black Mamba Anti-Poaching unit, and is the founder and director of Nkateko's Hluvukani Foundation; Timothy Kamuzu Phiri from Zambia is a passionate advocate for communities and wildlife in Zambia, and is the co-founder and director of **Mizu Eco-Care**.

For more: <https://gmfer.org/about/leadership/>

### (2) CITES' CoP19: Nature not Money

CITES' CoP19 was held in Panama City, Panama between the 14-24 of November 2022. GMFER's presence and advocacy at COP19 was noteworthy and of singular importance to our growing outreach; our work at CoP19 was supported by a collaborative coalition of 23 separate organizations. Our coalition adopted the theme, **Nature not Money** for CoP19.

GMFER appointed a 7-person delegation to attend CITES. Among our delegates were members of our primary partner at CITES, the [Panama Wildlife Conservation Charity \(PWCC\)](#). Also with us was a South Africa ranger and a member of Transfrontier Africa's Black Mamba Anti-Poaching unit, Sergeant Nkateko Mzimba.

In late summer, GMFER set up an [action page](#) for CoP19. The page details the 7 demands we made of CITES' Management Authorities. Online participants were urged to sign-on, pressing CITES' representatives to vote as recommended. Notably, a comprehensive letter justifying our demands and accompanied by signatory details was sent directly to selected CITES representatives.

On the opening day of the convention, GMFER, in collaboration with PWCC presented **A Celebration of Wildlife** at the entrance of the Panama City Convention Center. ~200 children, young adults and teachers from surrounding Panamanian schools joined GMFER, PWCC, our partners and others to celebrate earth's wild wonder. Under the banner of "Nature not Money", these young voices called on Management Authorities to place nature over money, to vote for a living earth.



## *Side Events*

GMFER staged two side events, each covering two distinct topics: The first focused on Namibian Desert Elephants presented by GMFER delegate and investigative journalist, John Grobler, the second part of this event centered on Traditional Chinese Medicine and the World Health Organization, presented by GMFER's president, Rosemary Alles.

The second side event called for *Oophaga vicentei* (Vicente's poison frog) to be placed on Appendix I, presented by Dr. Abel Batista and Eric Flores De Gracia of PWCC. Following this presentation, GMFER delegate and Transfrontier Africa's Sergeant Nkateko Mzimba offered her observations and experiences as a ranking member of The Black Mamba Anti-poaching unit.

## *New Allies*

As COP19 progressed, it was troubling to learn of the EU's rejection of a single listing (Appendix 1) for all African elephants. GMFER's response was to establish alliances with members of the EU parliament and lobbyists within the EU supportive of our position. We intend to solicit the help of these groups and individuals to build broader alliances in support of Appendix 1 for all African elephants.

## *Tweet Storm*

GMFER set up and implemented a set of automated tweets targeting specific Management Authorities of CITES. The tweets were tweeted out widely, leading up to the opening day of CoP19 and beyond. It is our determination that the Trophy Hunting lobby and oppositional forces within the EU reported the tweets, thereby constraining our ability to share them on certain social media platforms, such as Facebook.

## *A positive outcome*

A moratorium on the live capture and trade of African elephant populations was voted into effect at CoP19. The moratorium stands until the next conference of parties (CoP20). Prior to the vote on the moratorium, a Transfrontier Africa and GMFER representative presented an intervention, addressing the plenary session debating this vital issue. During her intervention, Sergeant Nkateko Mzimba from Transfrontier Africa's Black Mamba Anti-Poaching Unit spoke for Africa's last wild giants: Nkateko's intervention can be seen here: [bit.ly/3WBzXjU](https://bit.ly/3WBzXjU)

For more about GMFER at CoP19: <https://gmfer.org/ban-the-international-trade-in-endangered-iconic-species-cop-19/>



## (3) Programs

### ***Uganda: Happy Bruno and Bwindi Conservation for Generations Foundation (BCFGF):***

Happy Bruno is the director and co-founder of BCFGF and an elected council member of the Rubuguri Town Council in Uganda. Happy is also GMFER's primary representative in Uganda. Dovetailing with prior collaborative campaigns, an educational program was launched in 2022 in partnership with GMFER, BCFGF and the communities adjacent to Bwindi Impenetrable National Park.

The day-long-pilot-workshop focused on the women and children of Bwindi in the context of protecting earth's last mountain gorillas, Bwindi's forest elephants, the habitats of these iconic creatures and the threat of climate change. The pilot was the first in a series of workshops slated to convene once every 45 days. If resources permit, GMFER and BCFGF plan to organize excursions into the wild landscapes of Bwindi with the women, men, and children of Bwindi. We hope to learn from indigenous communities and increase community exposure to the wild creatures who call the misty mountains of the region, home.

An integral aspect of the program is to shape a methodology to measure impact and outcomes; of vital importance to grant applications and the viability of the program, the design and implementation of the methodology is underway.

### ***South Africa: Mambas in the Park (MITP):***

*The vision of Mambas in the Park is to establish creative and meaningful ways to disrupt dominant and persistent conservation paradigms that are failing human and animal communities throughout the African continent. These harmful paradigms must be replaced by those that are less didactic, deeply experiential, and intimately bound to nature.* <https://gmfer.org/our-work/mambas-in-the-park>

GMFER works with [Transfrontier Africa's](#) Black Mamba Anti-poaching unit, the families of the Mambas and their children to rewild the hearts and minds of indigenous communities within and adjacent to Kruger and the Greater Kruger region in South Africa. Our most recent partner in the MITP family is [Koru Camp](#). GMFER is grateful to Peter Eastwood, director, and founder of Koru for his generosity in hosting MITP for its monthly campouts and workshops in the wild world of the lowveld.

Our campouts and workshops are framed around specific "species-related" themes: rhino, pangolin, elephant, lion, puff adder, vulture and many more. At each MITP event, the children, and adults participate in an immersive learning experience centering on the history, culture, and threats faced by a specific species. The event culminates in quizzes and modest prizes. No adult or child leaves an MITP event ill-informed about the animal in question. During the campouts, the Mambas and their children participate in wilderness game drives; generally, one at dusk and another at dawn. The children delight in the game-drives and are exposed to an array of fauna and flora many have never seen before; *some have never seen elephants before*. In the past, the

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campouts have concluded with an educational workshop called “Wild Kindness” at Nourish Eco-Village, featuring community dogs; we hope to revive “Wild-Kindness” with Sam Keegan of **HAART - Helping All Animals in Rural Towns** in the near future.

Note\* MITP also participates in a food-drives. Led by Nkateko Mzimba, a Black Mamba who founded her own community organization in Hluvukani village, GMFER has sponsored food, school uniforms, and necessities for the greater Hluvukani community in collaboration with Nkateko’s Hluvukani Foundation.

## ***Zambia: GMFER and Mizu Eco-Care:***

Timothy Phiri (TK) is the Director and co-founder of Mizu Eco-Care in Zambia. TK first reached out to GMFER to introduce his organization and discuss future collaboration. In addition to joining the board, TK and GMFER are currently in conversation about programs and campaigns in support of indigenous communities and wildlife conservation efforts in Zambia. The collaboration has a specific agenda, vision, and mission already in place.

For more: <https://gmfer.org/our-works/programs/>

## **(4) Campaigns**

### ***Traditional Chinese Medicine and the WHO:***

The World Health Organization has implicitly recommended Traditional Medicine, including Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) via its most recent International Classification of Diseases (ICD). The WHO’s ICD-11 incorporates a chapter 26; the chapter recognizes and authorizes TCM without exempting the body parts of endangered and critically endangered animals. GMFER’s campaign to mitigate and regulate TCM continues. In 2022, we completed a significant portion of the proposed work, though much more remains to be done. Human and financial resources are a constraining factor, albeit we remain hopeful of completion in 2023.

### ***Trophy Hunting:***

The campaign against Trophy Hunting remained a priority throughout 2022. Our principal advocacy was directed toward the creation of a [special action page](#) on our website. Online participants were directed to sign-on to send a message to the U.S. Secretary of the Interior and the director of USFWS demanding an end to trophy imports into the USA. These messages were solicited in conjunction with a letter of demand signed by a coalition of anti-trophy hunting organizations sent directly to the Secretary of the Interior as well as the director of USFWS. These efforts were accompanied by Anti-Trophy-Hunting tweet-storms.

### ***A Report on Trophy Hunting by the Coalition Against Trophy Hunting:***

In conjunction with COP19 and the contested “efficacy” of trophy hunting, GMFER commissioned a report, *Trophy Hunting: The Abuse of Communities in Africa*. Produced by CATH (the Coalition Against Trophy Hunting),

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the report intends to highlight graphic and disturbing evidence of harms inflicted on indigenous Botswanan and Tanzanian communities in the context of Trophy Hunting. The report requires further edits and will be made available publicly as soon as final review is complete.

## ***RARE Sri Lanka:***

An advantage of Panchali Panapitiya's presence on GMFER's board is the opportunity it provides to collaborate with her work on behalf of Sri-Lanka's captive elephants. GMFER is happy to support RARE's work with modest financial support; the recent resources allocated by GMFER were directed toward litigation addressing the illegal capture of elephant calves from the wild. RARE, its partners and multiple others hope to regain possession of the "smuggled elephant calves" through appeals submitted to Sri Lanka's Supreme Court.

## ***VONG (India) and the Vigil for Elephants:***

Leveraging our [events page](#), we drove virtual traffic to two significant collaborative campaigns: the VONG SDG Championships in India, and the Vigil for Elephants in Rajagiriya, Sri Lanka.

For more: <https://gmfer.org/our-works/campaigns/>

## **(5) Administrative**

Throughout 2022, we made extensive use of our [new website](#) to advance our advocacy. The site is particularly useful when amplifying campaigns; a significant addendum to the site were our action pages, complementing our campaigns. We are grateful for the support and dedication of a talented and responsive web designer.

GMFER is largely an all-volunteer driven organization, albeit, we have two paid positions, one to manage social media and the other for content creation; both these positions are critical within the framework of our activism. Specifically, the social media manager played a pivotal role during GMFER's presence at CITES'CoP19; she continues to contribute significantly to our work. The writer of our blog and news stories is a highly productive content creator and supplies more than 2 new creative articles per month. GMFER hopes to extend its potential to employ more talent in the future.

## ***Fundraising:***

As the end of the year approaches, fundraising and sustainability remains an important though often overlooked priority. GMFER's agenda for 2023 will prioritize fundraising and grant applications to serve and sustain the meaningful work we do. To this end, proposals have been designed and developed and are currently in readiness for submission.



## ***Commissioned Artwork***

### *Elseed in Uganda.*

Edseed (Sadat Nduhira) was first commissioned in the fall of 2021 to create 5 paintings of elephants in varied landscapes. GMFER is very pleased to note the paintings have been completed this year, the results are delightful and will be auctioned or sold to raise funds for GMFER's work.

### *Tim Jeffs Art*

GMFER was fortunate to be introduced to an East Coast (US) artist, Tim Jeffs, through PWCC. Tim's stunning drawings of endangered species were commissioned as a central part of the visual presentation for the opening-day event at CITES' CoP19. The drawings were featured on t-shirts, as well as on placards and banners. Ongoing contractual considerations provide the opportunity for GMFER to use some of Tim's work for future graphics and merchandise.

## **(6) 2023-Primary-Goals**

1. Build a sustainable financial foundation that nourishes our people, our programs, and our campaigns.
2. Engage our networks, including those formed during CITES' CoP19 to ensure the highest level of protection for all African elephants.
3. Nurture GMFER's very successful relationship with PWCC; support PWCC's agenda to elevate Oophaga vicentei to Appendix 1 and seek PWCC's help to elevate all African elephants to Appendix 1.
4. Further our collaboration with Mizu Eco-Care, refining and implementing projects and campaigns based on Tim Phiri's proposal and MOU.
5. Complete TCM campaign/project.

## **Conclusion**

2022 was a significant year for GMFER; one during which our primary focus was the development of long-term strategies. We will continue to use the best features of our organizational DNA as we move into 2023; outspoken science-based advocacy governed by a charter of compassion and diplomacy. It has been an exceptionally gratifying year and a great delight to have shared it with so many dedicated conservationists whose objectives align with ours. We will continue to collaborate with like-minds and good hearts to build a living and livable earth.

**Support our work: <https://gmfer.org/donate>**

The GMFER Team.

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