



## Ivory ban to stay

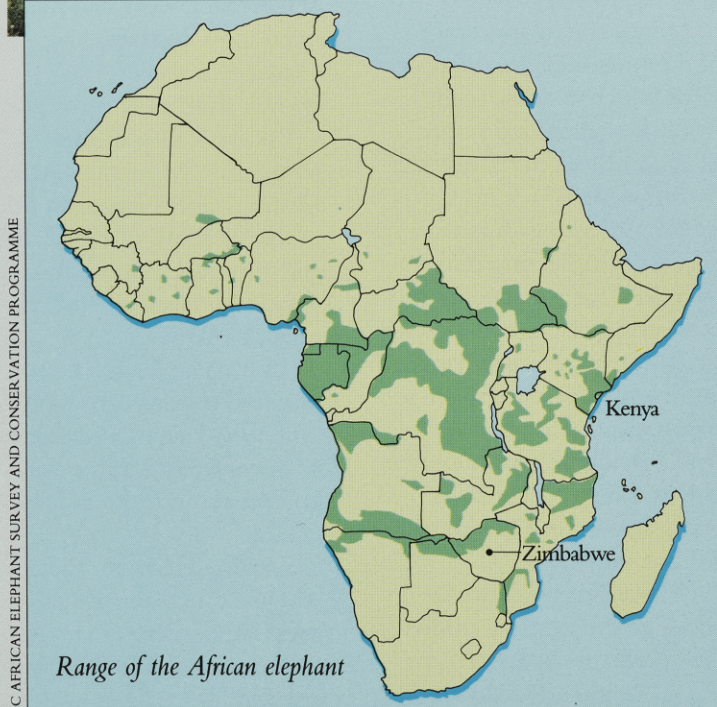
THE BAN on elephant ivory trading is to remain after a meeting of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) held in Japan in March.

The ban was put in place in 1989 because of considerable evidence that African elephants had become an endangered species. The population had crashed in ten years by almost 50 percent to only about half a million, mainly due to the ivory trade.

The six states at the southern end of the African elephant's range – Zimbabwe, Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, Malawi and Zambia – argued for a lifting of the ban on the grounds that numbers had increased substantially in the last two years. They also claimed that the income from ivory was needed to manage their elephant reserves. The remainder of the 35 states with African elephant populations argued for the ban to stay.

The opponents of the ban have healthy stable elephant populations which are not seriously endangered. However in East, Central and West Africa, elephants have been grossly over-exploited and many local populations are still in danger of extinction. The rapid decline of these northern populations has slowed since the ban came into effect because demand has been reduced, the price of ivory has dropped by 95 percent and more money has been put into anti-poaching efforts. The worry about opening up even the southern populations to a controlled ivory trade is that demand will rise, the price will increase and poaching would inevitably start again in the northern populations.

Advocates of continuing the ban also pointed out the



financial value of elephants as a living resource. In Kenya an elephant is worth over \$14,000 in income from tourism for every year of its life, giving it a potential value of nearly \$900,000. The ivory from the tusks of that elephant would be worth only \$1,000 at the pre-ban price. In Kenya alone elephant-related tourism brings in almost \$200 million a year – more than 30 times what the entire continent made from dead elephants before the ban.

The major concern, after the vote to continue the ban, is that countries such as Zimbabwe, who in culling their herds have built up ivory stocks worth over \$30 million, will start selling the ivory despite the ban.

Source: *Oryx*, New Scientist

## Rediscovery in South America

YET ANOTHER rediscovery from the rainforests of South America, emphasises just how little we know

*In the ten years before the 1989 ivory ban, Africa lost half its elephants due to uncontrolled poaching and an illegal ivory trade.*

about the world's disappearing wildlife. Kaempfer's Tody-tyrant *Idioptilon kaempferi* is one of the least known of the world's birds, having been described from just a single specimen in 1929. Three searches in the same locality in 1987 failed to find the bird.

Last year Mark Pearman rediscovered the species in humid lowland forest in Santa Catarina, southern Brazil, less than one kilometre from where the original specimen was taken.

The immediate forest where the bird was found is owned by the regional electrical company and thus has some degree of protection. The lower slopes of the mountains are secondary growth but, in general, the forest appeared in good condition. Logging trucks were noted in the nearby town of Villa Nova, however, and the area is clearly a potential forestry target.

Source: *International Council for Bird Preservation*