



United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

International Affairs
5275 Leesburg Pike, MS: IA
Falls Church, VA 22041-3803

MAY 20 2016

Dr. Stuart Levenbach
Department of the Interior Desk Officer
Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs
Office of Management and Budget
Washington, D.C. 20503

Dear Dr. Levenbach:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) requests emergency approval for the information collection associated with the revisions to the 4(d) rule for the African elephant under the Endangered Species Act. We also request a waiver of the requirement to publish 60- and 30-day notices for this emergency approval.

The revised 4(d) rule increases protection and benefits the conservation of African elephants by more strictly controlling U.S. trade in ivory, without unnecessarily restricting activities that have no conservation effect or are strictly regulated under other law. The Service is taking this action in response to an unprecedented increase in poaching of elephants across Africa to supply an escalating illegal trade in ivory. This action is consistent with Executive Order 13648 on Combating Wildlife Trafficking, issued in July 2013, and the stated priorities in the National Strategy for Combating Wildlife Trafficking, issued by President Obama in February 2014. It is critical for the conservation of the African elephant that publication of this final rule is not further delayed.

This rule has undergone significant public review and comment. We published a proposed rule in July 2015 with a 60-day comment period and engaged in broad consultation with impacted groups. We request approval by June 1, 2016. If you approve this emergency request, we will publish a 60-day notice in the *Federal Register* and seek regular OMB approval for this information collection. If you have any questions or need more information, please contact me by phone at 703-358-2162 or by email at Craig_Hoover@fws.gov.

Sincerely,

Craig Hoover, Chief
Division of Management Authority