

# IVORY DEMAND IN HONG KONG



**WILDAID**



# ABOUT WILDAID

WildAid's mission is to end the illegal wildlife trade in our lifetimes by reducing demand through public awareness campaigns and providing comprehensive marine protection.

The illegal wildlife trade is estimated to be worth over \$10 billion (USD) per year and has drastically reduced many wildlife populations around the world. Just like the drug trade, law and enforcement efforts have not been able to resolve the problem. Every year, hundreds of millions of dollars are spent protecting animals in the wild, yet virtually nothing is spent on stemming the demand for wildlife parts and products. WildAid is the only organization with a mission focused on reducing the demand for these products, with the strong and simple message: **When the buying stops, the killing can too.**

Via public service announcements and short-form documentary pieces, WildAid partners with Save the Elephants and African Wildlife Foundation to educate consumers and to reduce the demand for ivory products worldwide. Through our highly leveraged pro-bono media distribution outlets, our message reaches hundreds of millions of people each year in China alone.

[www.wildaid.org](http://www.wildaid.org)

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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African elephant, Amboseli National  
Park, Kenya (Poulomee Basu)

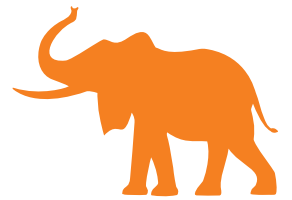
## DESIGNER

Hugo Ugaz

*Special thanks  
to the following supporters & partners  
who have made this work possible:*



EVERY YEAR, UP TO



**33,000 ELEPHANTS**  
ARE KILLED FOR THEIR IVORY

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Hong Kong plays a key role in the global ivory trade as a major market and transit point for smuggled ivory. While the Hong Kong government issues licenses to traders allowing them to sell ivory obtained before 1989, retailers use this system to sell illegal, recently poached ivory. In the three-year period between 2010-2012, more than 100,000 elephants were killed for their ivory,<sup>1</sup> and at least 65% of Africa's forest elephants were poached between 2002-2013.<sup>2</sup> The Hong Kong ivory trade not only stimulates consumer demand in Hong Kong and mainland China, but also perpetuates the poaching crisis in Africa by providing a cover for the laundering of illegal ivory. Traders make use of the fact that it's impossible to distinguish legal ivory from illegal ivory by sight alone.

In November 2014, WildAid and its conservation partners, African Wildlife Foundation and Save the Elephants, commissioned a poll by the University of Hong Kong's Public Opinion Programme (HKU POP) to document awareness about elephant conservation and attitudes on the ivory trade in Hong Kong.

**Survey results show a strong majority of respondents — 75% — support a ban on ivory sales in Hong Kong.** Of those in favor, 55% “very much support” a

ban, while 21% “quite support.” Additionally, three-quarters of respondents believe the Hong Kong government should stop issuing new ivory possession licenses.

An overwhelming majority of respondents reported that they didn't own any ivory: About 90% said they never purchase ivory or didn't know anyone who had done so within the past three years.

The poll also found a mixed understanding of the elephant poaching crisis. A significant majority of Hong Kong residents interviewed knew that elephants must be killed for their tusks, and that unlicensed ivory imports and re-exports were illegal. But only about one-third of respondents knew that African elephants could become extinct in the wild within our lifetime if current poaching rates continue, and only about a quarter of survey participants knew that ivory poaching is linked to militant groups and organized crime.

Though much work remains to be done to educate the public about the ivory trade's catastrophic effects, these survey results demonstrate the Hong Kong public's broad support for immediate government action to ban a trade that imperils African elephant populations.

1. Wittemyer, G., Northrup, J. M., Douglas-Hamilton, I., et al. “*Illegal killing for ivory drives global decline in African elephants.*” Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 2014.

2. Maisels, F., Strindberg, S., et al. “*Massive loss of forest elephants in Central Africa.*” WCS, 2014.

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*African elephant in Amboseli National Park, Kenya  
(Poulomee Basu)*





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# THREATS TO ELEPHANTS

Elephants are primarily poached for their ivory, which comes from the tusks of all African and male Asian elephants, and is used for carvings, ornaments, jewelry, trinkets, chopsticks and other crafts. While the use of ivory dates back hundreds of years, scientists believe ivory has been processed on an industrial scale in the last century to supply markets in the United States, Europe, and in recent decades, Asia.

In 2007, African elephant populations were estimated to be 500,000-700,000, while the estimated Asian elephant population was 30,000-50,000.

In 1976, the African elephant was listed under Appendix II of the UN Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), designed to control and limit trade, while in 1975 the Asian elephant was listed on CITES Appendix I, prohibiting international trade. However, the CITES regulatory system was subject to widespread abuse, and African elephant populations fell from more than 1.2 million to roughly 600,000 by 1989. During the 1980s, a decade referred to as the "Ivory Wars," at least 700,000 elephants were

slaughtered throughout Africa as legal trade enabled large-scale laundering of ivory from poached elephants.<sup>3</sup>

In response to this poaching epidemic, CITES banned the international elephant ivory trade in 1989, but domestic ivory sales continued to be legal in some countries. The international ban initially was a huge success: Ivory prices were drastically cut, almost eliminating markets in the U.S. and Europe. Poaching was greatly reduced, and elephant populations started to recover.

However, new markets emerged by 2008 as business ties between Asia and Africa increased. Economies grew rapidly in countries including China and created a new class of potential ivory consumers. Expanding markets have increased poaching dramatically in West, Central and East Africa, and the impacts on elephant populations continue to steadily worsen. A study published in July 2014 found that more than 100,000 elephants were illegally killed in Africa between 2010 and 2012 – a staggering ~33,630 each year.<sup>4</sup> The African forest elephant in particular has suffered a drastic decline in its population: In February 2014, scientists announced that

65% of forest elephants were poached between 2002 and 2013, leaving 95% of the forests of the Democratic Republic of Congo devoid of elephants.<sup>5</sup>

In addition, CITES allowed "one-off" sales of ivory from natural mortality, culls and seizures. The first one-off sale occurred in 1999, with ivory from Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe sold exclusively to Japan. In 2008, a second sale to Japan included South Africa's stockpile and allowed China to purchase 62 tons of ivory.<sup>6,7</sup>

3. Walsh, Bryan. "African Nations Move to 'Downlist' the Elephant." Time Magazine Online, 2010.

4. Wittemyer, G., Northrup, J. M., Douglas-Hamilton, I., et al. "Illegal killing for ivory drives global decline in African elephants." Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 2014.

5. Maisels, F., Strindberg, S., et al. "Massive loss of forest elephants in Central Africa." WCS, 2014.

6. "Experts report highest elephant poaching and ivory smuggling rates in a decade." www.traffic.org, 2012.

7. Gabriel, G. G., Hua, N., and Wang, J. "Making a Killing: A 2011 Survey of Ivory Markets in China." International Fund for Animal Welfare, 2012.



## IVORY TRADE IN HONG KONG

Hong Kong is a major market and transit point for smuggled ivory, and is classified by CITES as one of nine countries/regions of priority concern.<sup>8</sup> The city has become an attractive destination for a new class of wealthy individuals, primarily from mainland China, who buy tax-free luxury goods, including ivory products.

In 2014, Hong Kong attracted 61 million tourists — 47 million of which came from mainland China. At the same time, Hong Kong is one of the world's busiest ports: Customs officers only have the capacity to search 1% of the 22 million containers passing through the port of Hong Kong each year, yet still seize more illegal ivory than any other country outside Africa. A staggering eight tons of ivory were confiscated in

2013 alone, 14% of the global total.<sup>9</sup> This volume hints at the possibility that large hauls are passing through Hong Kong undetected.

As a response to public pressure and pleas to end the elephant poaching crisis, four of Hong Kong's top ivory traders — Chinese Arts & Crafts (Hong Kong) Limited, Wing On Department Store, Yue Hwa Chinese Products Emporium and Chinese Goods Centre Limited — have publicly renounced the selling of elephant ivory.

*Yao Ming with poached elephant, South Africa, 2012  
(Kristian Schmidt)*

8. See CoP16 Doc. 53.2.2 (Rev. 1) "ETIS Report of TRAFFIC," <http://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/cop/16/doc/E-CoP16-53-02-02.pdf>; and SC64 Doc.2 "National Ivory Action Plans," <http://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/sc/64/E-SC64-02.pdf>.

9. "Hong Kong needs to do better in illegal wildlife trade fight," <http://eia-international.org/hong-kong-needs-to-do-better-in-illegal-wildlife-trade-fight>. November 2014.



# 2014 HONG KONG SURVEY

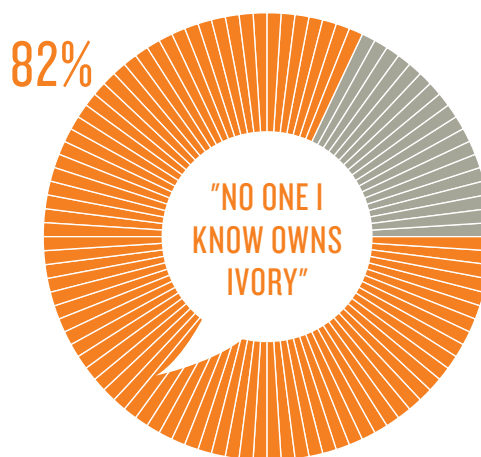
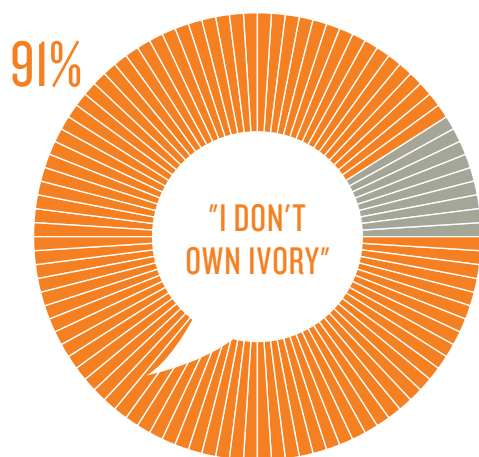
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In November-December 2014, WildAid and its conservation partners, African Wildlife Foundation and Save the Elephants, commissioned a survey by the University of Hong Kong's Public Opinion Programme (HKU POP) on ivory consumption trends in Hong Kong. WildAid and HKU POP interviewed 1,021 residents to better understand awareness of elephant conservation, attitudes toward ivory consumption and knowledge of the ivory trade.

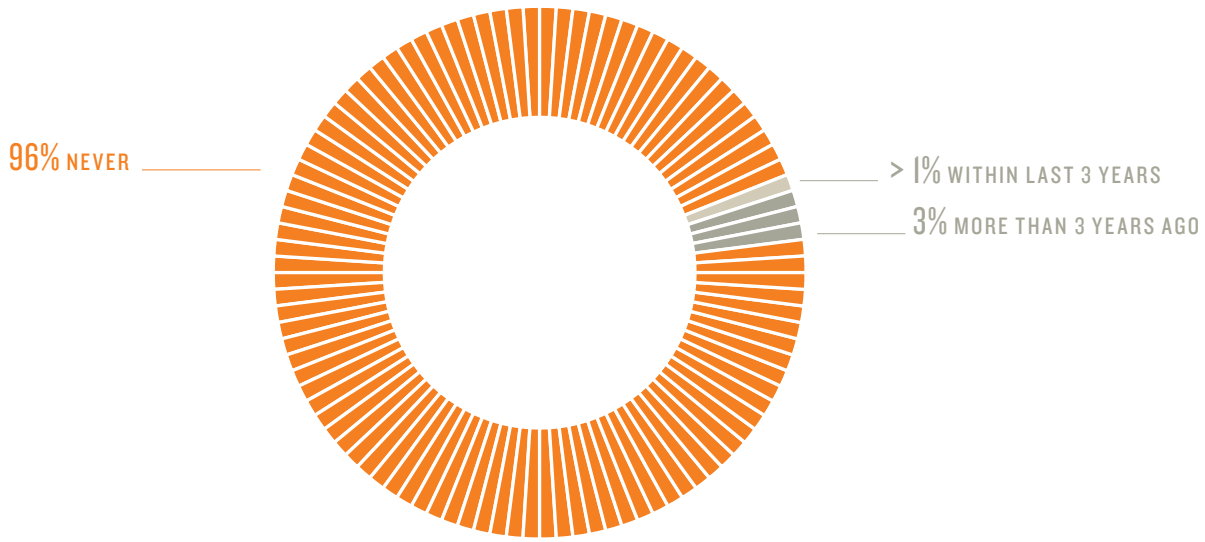
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## SURVEY KEY FINDINGS

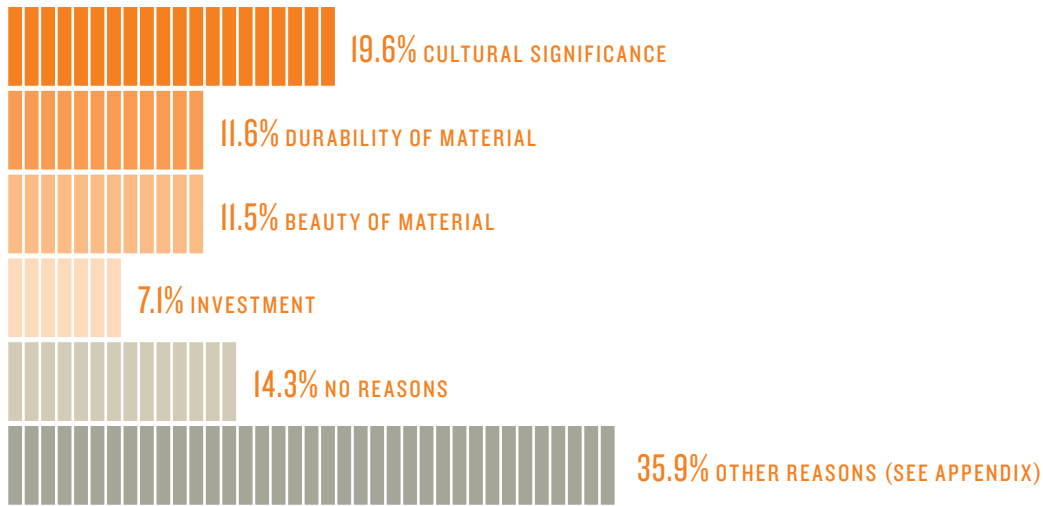
1. **91% of respondents do not own ivory, and 82% said no one they knew owned ivory.**



2. **96% of respondents claimed that they had never bought ivory products before.** Less than 1% of respondents admitted to buying ivory within the last three years; 3% admitted to buying ivory more than three years ago.



3. **When asked why they bought ivory, 19.6% of those who had purchased it responded “cultural significance.”** 11.6% said “durability of material,” 11.5% said “beauty of material,” and 7.1% said “investment.” Other responses included “gift from friends” and “healthier to use ivory chopsticks.”



4. **71% of respondents were aware that elephants are poached for their tusks.** These respondents said they knew that “elephant tusks do not fall out like teeth, but in order to get the ivory, elephants must die or be killed.”



*African elephant, Amboseli National Park, Kenya (Poulomee Basu)*



5. **34% of respondents were aware that the African elephant species could be extinct in the wild within our lifetime if the current poaching rate continues.**



**34% AWARE THAT THE AFRICAN ELEPHANT SPECIES COULD BE EXTINCT IN THE WILD WITHIN OUR LIFETIME.**

6. **Only 26% of respondents knew that ivory poaching has been linked to terrorism and international organized crime.**



**26% AWARE THAT IT HAS BEEN PROVEN IVORY POACHING IS LINKED TO TERRORISM AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME.**

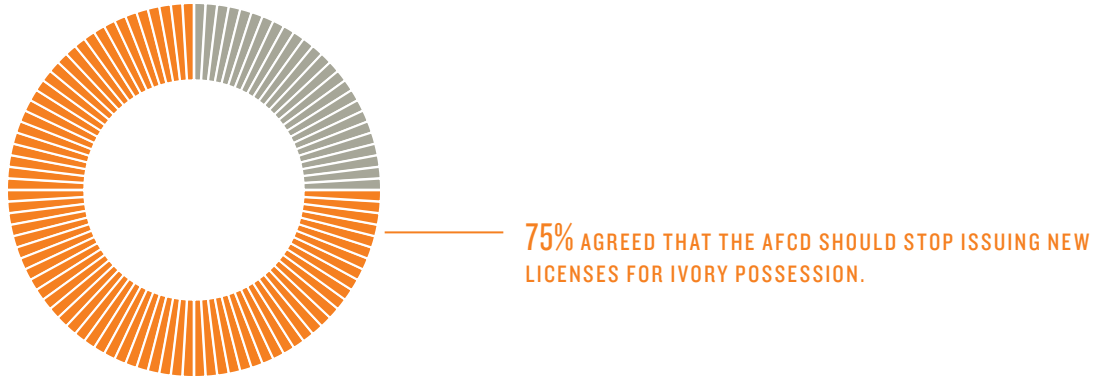
7. **84% of participants knew that a license is required to import or export ivory.**



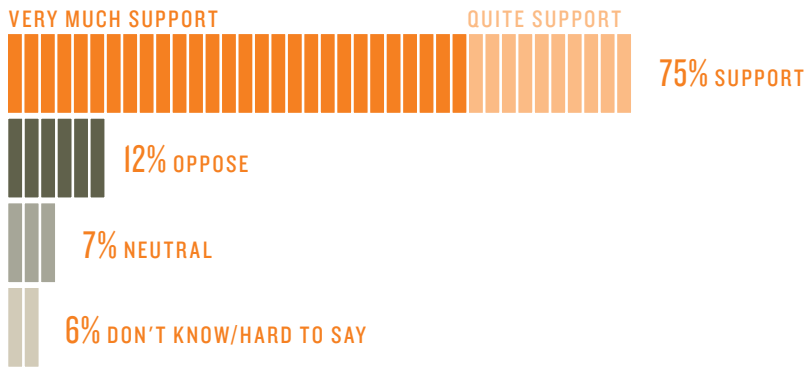
**84% KNEW THAT IT IS ILLEGAL TO IMPORT OR EXPORT IVORY OUT OF HONG KONG WITHOUT A LICENSE.**



8. 75% of respondents agreed that the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) should stop issuing new licenses for ivory possession.



9. 75% of respondents expressed support for an ivory sales ban in Hong Kong (55% “very much support” and 21% “quite support”), while just 12% oppose such a ban.



African elephants, Amboseli National Park, Kenya (Poulomee Basu)



# APPENDIX – RAW SURVEY DATA

**Sample Size:** 1,021 respondents

**Type:** Telephone survey using a Web-based Computer Assisted Telephone Interview system; numbers were randomly generated

**Requirements:** Cantonese speakers

**Age:** 18 years and older

**Income:** Full range

**Date:** November 27 – December 9, 2014

**Weighted:** Raw data was rim weighted based on 2014 figures from the Census and Statistics Department

## Q1. Do you own any ivory or ivory products?

	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (BASE = 1,021)
YES	89	8.7%
NO	925	<b>90.6%</b>
DONT KNOW/HARD TO SAY	7	0.7%
TOTAL	1,021	100%

## Q2. Do you know anyone who owns ivory or ivory products?

	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (BASE = 1,021)
YES, I KNOW SOMEONE WHO OWNS	116	11.4%
NO, I KNOW NOBODY WHO OWNS	836	<b>81.9%</b>
DON'T KNOW / HARD TO SAY	68	6.7%
TOTAL	1,021	100%

## Q3. Besides yourself, do you know anyone who has bought ivory or ivory products in the last one, two or three year(s)?

	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (BASE = 1,021)
YES, I KNOW SOMEONE WHO HAS BOUGHT IVORY PRODUCTS LAST YEAR	9	0.9%
YES, I KNOW SOMEONE WHO HAS BOUGHT IVORY PRODUCTS LAST TWO YEARS	6	0.6%
YES, I KNOW SOMEONE WHO HAS BOUGHT IVORY PRODUCTS LAST THREE YEARS	6	0.6%
NO, I KNOW NOBODY WHO HAS BOUGHT IVORY PRODUCTS IN THE LAST THREE YEARS	917	89.8%
DON'T KNOW / HARD TO SAY	83	8.1%
TOTAL	1,021	100%

**Q4. Have you bought any ivory or ivory products in the last one, two or three year(s)?**

	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (BASE = 1,021)
YES, HAVE BOUGHT IVORY PRODUCTS LAST YEAR	2	0.2%
YES, HAVE BOUGHT IVORY PRODUCTS LAST TWO YEARS	2	0.2%
YES, HAVE BOUGHT IVORY PRODUCTS LAST THREE YEARS	1	0.1%
YES, MORE THAN THREE YEARS AGO	30	3.0%
NEVER (SKIP TO Q6)	977	95.8%
DON'T KNOW / HARD TO SAY (SKIP TO Q6)	7	0.7%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,020</b>	<b>100%</b>
MISSING (SKIP TO Q6)	1	

**Q5. [Only for those who have bought ivory products before in Q4, Base=36]  
Why did you buy ivory or ivory products?**

	FREQUENCY	% OF TOTAL RESPONSES (BASE = 34)	% OF VALID SAMPLE (BASE = 33)
CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE	7	19.6%	20.2%
DURABILITY OF MATERIAL	4	11.6%	11.9%
BEAUTY OF MATERIAL	4	11.5%	11.8%
INVESTMENT	2	7.1%	7.3%
NO REASONS	5	14.3%	14.7%
OTHERS (SEE BELOW)	12	35.9%	37.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>34</b>		
MISSING	3		

**Others that cannot be grouped into the table**

<i>Gift from friends</i>	4
<i>It can be poison-testing tool</i>	2
<i>Decorative</i>	2
<i>Healthier to use ivory chopsticks for food</i>	1
<i>Daily needs</i>	1
<i>Personal particulars</i>	1
<i>Asked by elderly to buy ivory chopsticks</i>	1
<i>Followed the trend</i>	<1
<i>Products are nice and cheaper</i>	<1
<i>For fun</i>	<1
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>12</b>

**Q6. Did you know that elephant tusks do not fall out like teeth, but in order to get the ivory, elephants must die or be killed?**

	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (BASE = 1,021)
YES	726	71.2%
NO	294	<b>28.8%</b>
TOTAL	1,021	100%
MISSING	1	

**Q7. Do you know that it has been proven that ivory poaching is linked to terrorist trade and international organized crime?**

	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (BASE = 1,021)
YES	269	26.4%
NO	752	<b>73.6%</b>
TOTAL	1,021	100%

**Q8. Did you know that one elephant is killed every fifteen minutes, which is 96 elephants per day, and if current poaching rates continue, the African elephant species could be extinct in the wild within our lifetime?**

	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (BASE = 1,021)
YES	350	34.3%
NO	671	<b>65.7%</b>
TOTAL	1,021	100%

**Q9. Back to Hong Kong, do you know that it is illegal to import or export ivory out of Hong Kong without a license?**

	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (BASE = 1,021)
YES	855	83.8%
NO	166	<b>16.2%</b>
TOTAL	1,021	100%





Hong Kong ivory protest, March 2015  
(Alex Hofford)

香港政府：  
馬上禁止象牙買賣！

**Q10. By end of 2013, about 450 licenses for ivory possession have been issued by AFCD in Hong Kong. Do you think AFCD should continue or stop issuing new licenses in future?**

	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (BASE = 1,021)
CONTINUE	122	12.0%
STOP	759	74.6%
DON'T KNOW / HARD TO SAY (SKIP TO Q6)	136	13.4%
TOTAL	1,017	100%
MISSING	4	

**Q11. Finally, how much would you support or oppose a ban on selling ivory in Hong Kong?**

	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (BASE = 1,021)
VERY MUCH SUPPORT } SUPPORT	560 } 771	54.8% } 75.4%
QUITE SUPPORT	211	20.6%
HALF-HALF	72	7.1%
QUITE OPPOSE } OPPOSE	51 } 120	5.0% } 11.8%
VERY MUCH OPPOSE	69	6.8%
DON'T KNOW / HARD TO SAY	58	5.7%
TOTAL	1,021	100%

# WILDAID



SAVE THE ELEPHANTS



AFRICAN WILDLIFE FOUNDATION®



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