

Report from Dr Johan Marais, on Dukes tusk record consideration:

“With regards to Duke's tusks:

It is a well-known fact that tusks grows continuously throughout life, and in these big bulls, that the tusks grow exponentially towards the end of their life (probably from about 35 years of age). However, the length also depends on the shape of the tusks, i.e. compare the tusks of Shawu that grew forward and did not get worn down, with the tusks of Mafunyane that grew straight down and got used for digging, resting etc. Because ivory is quite soft, these tusks gets worn shorter quite quickly.

Duke used his tusks for digging of roots etc. and he also regularly rested them on the ground, therefore wearing them down. When his tusks broke, none of this happened and actually gave the tusks ample time to grow out without any interference from ground, roots etc. (e.g. Joao). He might have used it occasionally to debark trees. It is therefore probably not accurate to take the full length of the broken tusks into account when measuring his ivory - it will probably give us a false longer measurement as I have described above. If both tusks were still intact, they would not have been the length as is currently stated in my opinion.

Best regards

Johan

Dr Johan Marais. BVSc. MSc”