



Puducherry ENVIS Hub

Host Centre : Puducherry Pollution Control Committee
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World Elephant Day

12th August, 2021



Save the Elephants



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National Heritage Animal

History of World Elephant Day

- ✓ World Elephant Day was found on August 12, 2012, by Canadian filmmaker Patricia Sims in collaboration with the Elephant Reintroduction Foundation of Thailand.
- ✓ It was an initiative of HM Queen Sirikit of Thailand. World Elephant Day represents the urgent predicament of African and Asian elephants.
- ✓ Since then, World Elephant Day has been celebrated throughout the world and to this day more than 100 organizations have reached countless people across the globe. World Elephant Day shows that elephants are loved and deserve a respectful life.
- ✓ World Elephant Day provides the platform to different organizations and people to give voice to the issues endangering elephants.
- ✓ This collective initiative gives policy-makers, politicians, citizens, and governments a way to create conservation solutions that will provide a haven for elephants,

Why World Elephant Day is Important

We love elephants

Humans haven't been very kind to elephants throughout history, despite all they've done for us. They are intelligent, loving, and mysterious creatures that should be preserved.

They're crucial to the environment

Elephants are a keystone species, which means they create and maintain the ecosystems in which they live and make it possible for a myriad of plant and animal species to live in those environments as well. The loss of elephants gravely affects many species that depend on elephant-maintained ecosystems and causes major habitat chaos and a weakening to the structure and diversity of nature itself.



We don't know much about them

Elephants have the largest brains of any living mammal on Earth. We still have a lot to learn from them and we can't do that if they are all extinct.

How can I get involved in World Elephant Day?

There are many ways you can contribute to World Elephant Day!

- ✓ Host your own World Elephant Day event and screen the *When Elephants Were Young* documentary.
- ✓ Inform other people about How to Help Elephants.
- ✓ Share your love and concern for elephants on your Facebook page

- ✓ Donate to one of the many dedicated organizations across the globe working to save elephants.
- ✓ Donate to the World Elephant Society to help raise funds for its latest project to research the best opportunities for safe Asian elephant tourism, the continuation of its public awareness and educational outreach about the plight of African and Asian elephants, and the management of the annual World Elephant Day campaign.
- ✓ Download our Be Elephant Ethical (BEE) infographic!



Elephants: Ecosystem Engineers



Elephants are a keystone species, playing an important role in maintaining the biodiversity of the ecosystems in which they live.

- ★ During the dry season, elephants use their tusks to dig for water. This not only allows the elephants to survive in dry environments and when droughts strike, but also provides water for other animals that share harsh habitats.
- ★ When forest elephants eat, they create gaps in the vegetation. These gaps allow new plants to grow and create pathways for other smaller animals to use. They are also one of the major ways in which trees disperse their seeds; some species rely entirely upon elephants for seed dispersal.
- ★ On the savannas, elephants feeding on tree sprouts and shrubs help to keep the plains open and able to support the plains game that inhabit these ecosystems.
- ★ Wherever they live, elephants leave dung that is full of seeds from the many plants they eat. When this dung is deposited the seeds are sown and grow into new grasses, bushes and trees, boosting the health of the savannah ecosystem.



Elephants are “ecosystem engineers”: They push over trees to maintain savanna ecosystems, excavate waterholes and fertilize land, which helps other animals thrive. Elephants have also been shown to be an effective focal species for conservation planning, as their habitat is highly correlated to other large mammals and species of conservation interest. Elephants are found in a wide variety of ecosystems, including savannas, grasslands and forests, but also deserts, swamps and mountains. Protecting elephant habitat helps many other species as

Elephants: A Traditional Symbol of Divinity and Royalty



Name: Lakshmi Elephant
Place : Arulmigu Sri Manakula Vinayagar
Temple, Puducherry

For centuries, India has regarded the majestic royal beast, the elephant, as its cultural symbol. The highly revered Hindu God, Lord Ganesha, is said to be a remover of obstacles and a provider of fortune and good luck. Considering this beloved God has been envisioned with an elephant head and a human body, elephants are believed to be an incarnation or representation of Ganesha. Furthermore, people believe that Lord Indra, the God of rain, thunder, and lightning, has a divine white elephant as a mount, thereby establishing elephants as a symbol of divinity and royalty.

These mythological and cultural Hindu beliefs have established elephants as sacred symbols of peace, mental strength, and power. In line with these views, over the years, people have worshipped and used elephants in several ways. For example, royalty has employed war elephants to strengthen their armies, flaunt the kingdom's bravery and bring prestige and stature to their title. Elephants were also used in religious ceremonies and rituals in temples. Some elephants were even kept as pets and considered family members in ancient times!

Unique Interesting Facts About Elephants:

- ✓ The daily requirement of food by an elephant is around 150 kg on daily basis. Because of this the feeding time of an elephant is of 18 hours a day.
- ✓ Elephant calves can weigh around 120 kg and they can walk within one hour after their birth.
- ✓ The tusk of an elephant keeps on growing in its entire life.
- ✓ Elephant uses its tusk for a lot of purposes such as drinking water and spraying it all over their body.
- ✓ The tusk can hold up to 8 liters of water at one time.
- ✓ Elephants can also use their tusks to dig water underground in case of scarcity of water.
- ✓ A healthy elephant has an average lifespan of 50 to 70 years of age.
- ✓ A baby elephant can weigh up to 100 kg.

The main threats to elephants:

**Habitat destruction
by humans**

Ivory poaching

**Human-elephant conflict
due to competition for
the same land and resources**

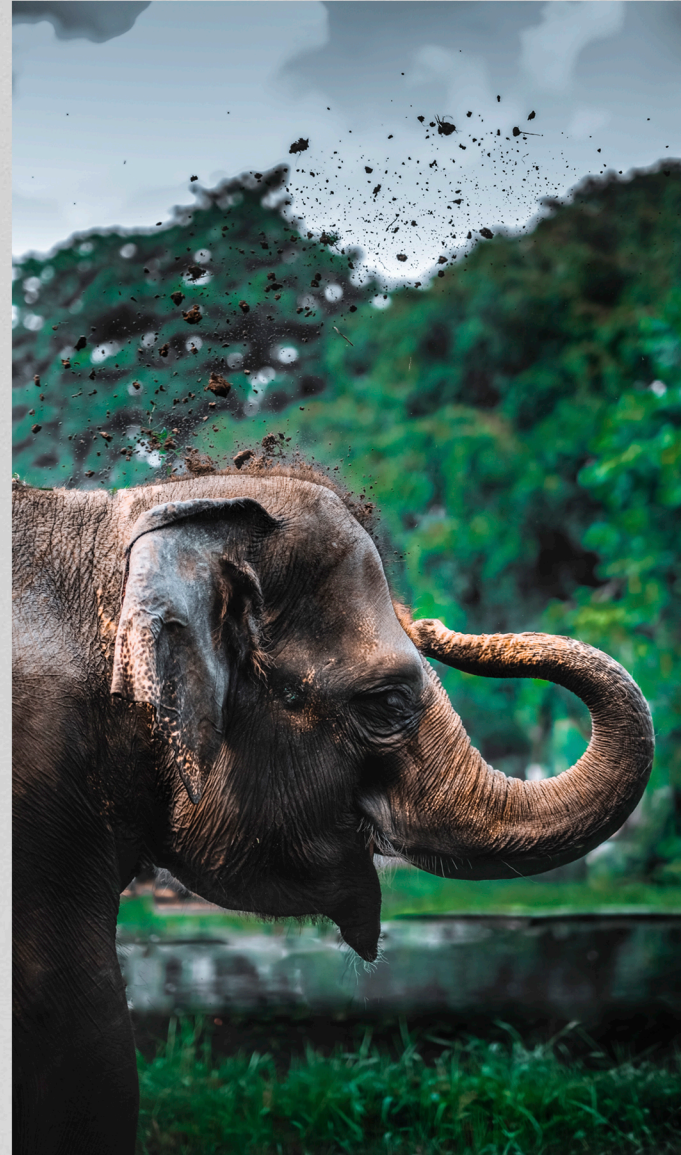
Disease

Indian Laws Protecting Elephants

The Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, clearly lays down the laws that protect the elephants in India. The State Forest Department works actively in each state to protect the forests and wildlife and become the first responders in the case of any untoward incident that involves wild animals.

IMPORTANT SECTIONS OF THE WILDLIFE PROTECTION ACT 1972:

- ✓ **The Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, was amended in 2002** and banned the sale of captive elephants which were not registered with the Chief Wildlife Warden of the State. If an elephant is owned without being declared, the Forest Department has the authority to cease the elephant on the grounds of illegal ownership.
- ✓ **Section 9 of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972** talks about the prohibition of hunting of the animals listed **under Schedule I, II, III, IV**. The elephant is a protected species under Schedule I and so is the sloth bear! Hunting of animals listed under these Schedules will invite heavy punishment and incarceration of up to 7 years.
- ✓ **Section 40 (2)** of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 prohibits the acquisition, possession and transfer of a captive elephant without the written permission of the Chief Wildlife Warden of the State.
- ✓ **Section 42** reinstates that the Ownership Certificate can be issued to the person who has the lawful authority of the captive animal listed under Schedule I and II.
- ✓ **Section 48 (b)** clearly states that no wild animal under Schedule I and II can be captured, sold, purchased, transferred and transported unless the Authorized Officer does not certify the lawful possession of the same.
- ✓ **Section 40** of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, also talks about the mandatory issuance of Transit Permit (TP) by the State Forest Department when an elephant is being transported from one state to another. Additionally, TP has to be issued by each state from which the elephant will pass through including the state in which the elephant will be finally going to.



Common Name: Asian Elephant

Scientific Name: *Elephas maximus*

Type: Mammals

Diet: Herbivore

Group Name: Herd

Average Life Span in the Wild: Up to 60 years

Size: Height at the shoulder: 6.6 to 9.8 feet

Weight: 2.25 to 5.5 tons

Gestation period: Asian elephant: 18 – 22 months, African bush elephant: 22 months



Solutions are never simple. How do we conserve elephants and at the same time allow people to thrive?

- 1. Habitat protection**
- 2. Anti-poaching efforts**
- 3. Coexistence between elephants and humans**
- 4. Volunteering for elephants**
- 5. Learning about elephant diseases**

Types of Elephants?

African savanna elephant (*Loxodonta africana*), African forest elephant (*Loxodonta cyclotis*), and Asian elephant (*Elephas maximus*). The Asian elephant is further divided into three subspecies: Indian elephant (*E. m. indicus*), Sri Lankan elephant (*E. m. maximus*), and Sumatran elephant (*E. m. sumatranus*).

Elephant Population in India (2017)

Source : Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change

India	Elephant Population
Northeast Region	
Arunachal Pradesh	1614
Assam	5719
Meghalaya	1754
Tripura	102
Nagaland	446
North Bengal	488
Manipur	9
Mizoram	7
Total: 10,139	
East Central Region	
Odisha	1976
Jharkhand	679
Chhattisgarh	247
Bihar	25
Madhya Pradesh	7
South Bengal	194
Total: 3128	
Northwest Region	
Uttarakhand	1839
Uttar Pradesh	232
Haryana	7
Himachal Pradesh	7
Total: 2085	
Southern Region	
Karnataka	6049
Kerala	3054
Maharashtra	6
Andhra Pradesh	65
Andaman and Nicobar Islands	19
Tamil Nadu	2761
Total: 11,960	
Total	27,312

