



New Elephant Reserve in Tamil Nadu

Why in News?

Recently, the Government of India has announced the notification of one more [Elephant Reserve \(ER\)](#) Agasthiyamalai in Tamil Nadu during a programme in the [Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary in Kerala](#).

- This will be the **32nd Elephant Reserve in the country** after Singphan ER in Nagaland was notified in 2018.
- Agasthiyamalai is Tamil Nadu's 5th Elephant Reserve and also a [Biosphere Reserve](#).

What do we need to know about Indian Elephant?

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- **About:**
 - It is also known as "**Elephas maximus**".
- **Location:**
 - Central and Southern Western Ghats
 - North East India
 - Eastern India
 - Northern India
 - Some parts of Southern Peninsular India.
- **Protection Status:**

- [IUCN Red List](#): Endangered
- [CITES](#): Appendix I
- [Wildlife Protection Act 1972](#): Schedule I
- **Statistics in India:**
 - The population of elephants in India has reached up to about 27,312 (2017 Census).
 - **Karnataka had the highest number** of elephants (6,049), followed by Assam (5,719) and Kerala (3,054).

What is Project Elephant?

- **About:**
 - It is a [centrally sponsored scheme](#) and was launched in February 1992 for the **protection of elephants, their habitats and corridors**.
 - The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change provides financial and technical support to major elephant range states in the country through the project.
- **Objectives:**
 - To protect elephants, their habitat & corridors
 - To address issues of man-animal conflict
 - Welfare of captive elephants

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Q. With reference to Indian elephants, consider the following statements: (2020)

1. The leader of an elephant group is a female.
2. The maximum gestation period can be 22 months.
3. An elephant can normally go on calving till the age of 40 years only.
4. Among the States in India, the highest elephant population is in Kerala.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 4 only
- (c) 3 only
- (d) 1, 3 and 4 only

Ans: (a)

Exp:

- The elephant herd is led by the oldest and largest female member (known as the matriarch). This herd includes the daughters of the matriarch and their offspring. Hence, statement 1 is correct.
- Elephants have the longest-known gestational (pregnancy) period of all mammals, lasting up to 680 days (22 months). Hence, statement 2 is correct. Females between 14 - 45 years may give birth to calves approximately every four years with the mean interbirth intervals increasing to five years by age 52 and six years by age 60. Hence, statement 3 is not correct.
- As per Elephant Census (2017), Karnataka has the highest number of elephants (6,049), followed by Assam (5,719) and Kerala (3,054). Hence, statement 4 is not correct.
- **Therefore, option (a) is the correct answer.**

Source: DTE

