



# Captive Elephant (Transfer or Transport) Rules, 2024

[Source: TH](#)

## Why in News?

The Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) has notified the **Captive Elephant (Transfer or Transport) Rules, 2024**, which liberalises the conditions for transferring [elephants](#) within or between states.

## What are the Captive Elephant (Transfer or Transport) Rules, 2024?

- **Circumstances for Transfer of Captive Elephants:** Transfer may occur when:
  - The **owner is no longer capable** of adequately maintaining the elephant's welfare.
  - If it's determined that the **elephant will receive better care in the new circumstances** compared to its current situation.
  - The **Chief Wildlife Warden may deem it necessary** for the elephant's better upkeep based on the specific circumstances of the case.
- **Procedure Within the State:**
  - Before a transfer within a state, the **elephant's health must be confirmed** by a veterinarian.
  - The suitability of both the current and prospective habitats must be verified by the **Deputy Conservator of Forests**.
  - Approval or rejection of the transfer is at the discretion of the **Chief Wildlife Warden** based on these assessments.
- **Procedure Outside the State:**
  - Similar conditions apply for transferring elephants outside a state.
  - Additionally, the [elephant's genetic profile](#) **must be registered** with the MoEF&CC before the transfer.
- **Requirements for Elephant Transfer:**
  - The elephant must be accompanied by a **mahout and an elephant assistant**.
  - A health certificate from a veterinary practitioner confirming fitness for transport is mandatory.
  - Transport should occur after the quarantine period, if required for contagious diseases, is completed.
  - Proper feeding and watering arrangements must be made during transport.
  - Tranquillisers/sedatives shall be used to control nervous or temperamental elephants upon prescription by the veterinary practitioner.

## Note

- Until August 2022, the Wildlife Protection Act 1972 explicitly **prohibited the trade in wildlife including both wild and captive elephants**.
- The Captive Elephant (Transfer or Transport) Rules, 2024 stem from **amendments to the [Wildlife Protection Act in 2022](#)** exempting captive elephants from the prohibition on wildlife trade.
  - A Parliamentary Committee, recommended the deletion of this exemption clause for elephants and providing **only an exemption for elephants owned by temple trusts** and argued that a “careful balance” between traditions and conservation was needed.

- Despite recommendations to delete this exemption, the final amended act retains it, **allowing transfers only for elephants with an existing certificate of ownership.**

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# ELEPHANT

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### 4 Main Species of Elephant

| Species        | Found in | IUCN Red List Status                      | Habitat  |
|----------------|----------|---|--|
| Indian         | Asia     | EN (CITES - Appendix I, WPA - Schedule I) | Subtropical broadleaf forest, tropical broadleaf moist forest, dry forest, grassland |
| Sumatran       | Asia     | CR  | Broadleaf moist tropical forests   |
| Savanna (Bush) | Africa   | EN  | All sub-Saharan Africa except for Central Africa's dense tropical forest             |
| Forest         | Africa   | CR  | Dense Tropical Forests   |

### Indian Elephant (*Elephas maximus*)

**Largest Land Mammal on Asian Continent**  
**National Heritage Animal of India**

- Top 5 Indian States by Maximum Elephant Population:**  
(As per elephant census 2017)
  - Karnataka > Assam > Kerala > Tamil Nadu > Odisha
- Social Structure:**
  - Female elephants are more social than males; form herd (generally 5-7)
  - Led by the oldest female, the 'matriarch'
  - Males usually live alone
- Threats:**
  - Habitat Fragmentation
  - Poaching for Ivory
  - Human-Elephant Conflict
  - Mistreatment in Captivity
- Conservation Efforts:**
  - Gaj Sookhna App (2022)
  - Gaj Yatra (2017)
  - Hathi Mere Sathi campaign (2011)
  - National Elephant Corridor project (2005)
  - Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) Programme (2003)
  - Project Elephant (1992)

## 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)**