



Elephant Deaths in Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve

Why in News?

Recently, four elephants were found dead and five others critically ill in [Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve, Madhya Pradesh](#), prompting a thorough investigation by wildlife officials and conservation teams.

Key Points

- **Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve:**
 - Located in Madhya Pradesh, [Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve](#) spans an area rich in biodiversity and serves as one of India's premier tiger habitats.
 - **Elephant Population:**
 - Originally devoid of elephants, the reserve saw its first elephant herd migration from Chhattisgarh in 2018, marking the start of a permanent elephant population within the reserve.
 - The initial herd numbered around 15-20 elephants and has since been observed in both core and buffer areas of the reserve.
- The elephants were located in **Reserved Forest (RF) 384 and Protected Forest (PF) 183 A**, in the Salakhaniya Beat of Khitauli and Pataur core ranges.

Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve (BTR)

- It is located in the **Umaria district of Madhya Pradesh** and is spread over the Vindhya hills.
- **In 1968**, it was notified as a national park and in 1993 was declared a tiger reserve- under the Project Tiger Network at the neighbouring Panpatha Sanctuary.
- It is known for the **Royal Bengal Tigers**. The density of the tiger population at Bandhavgarh is the highest known in India as well as in the world.
 - These streams then merge into the [Son river](#) (an important southern tributary to the river Ganga).
- The important prey species consists of **chital, sambhar, barking deer, nilgai, chinkara, wild pig, chowsingha, langur and rhesus macaque**.
 - Dependent upon them are the major predators like tiger, [leopard](#), wild dog, wolf and jackal.

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ELEPHANT

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 Sochna 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)